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Oct. 11, 1999

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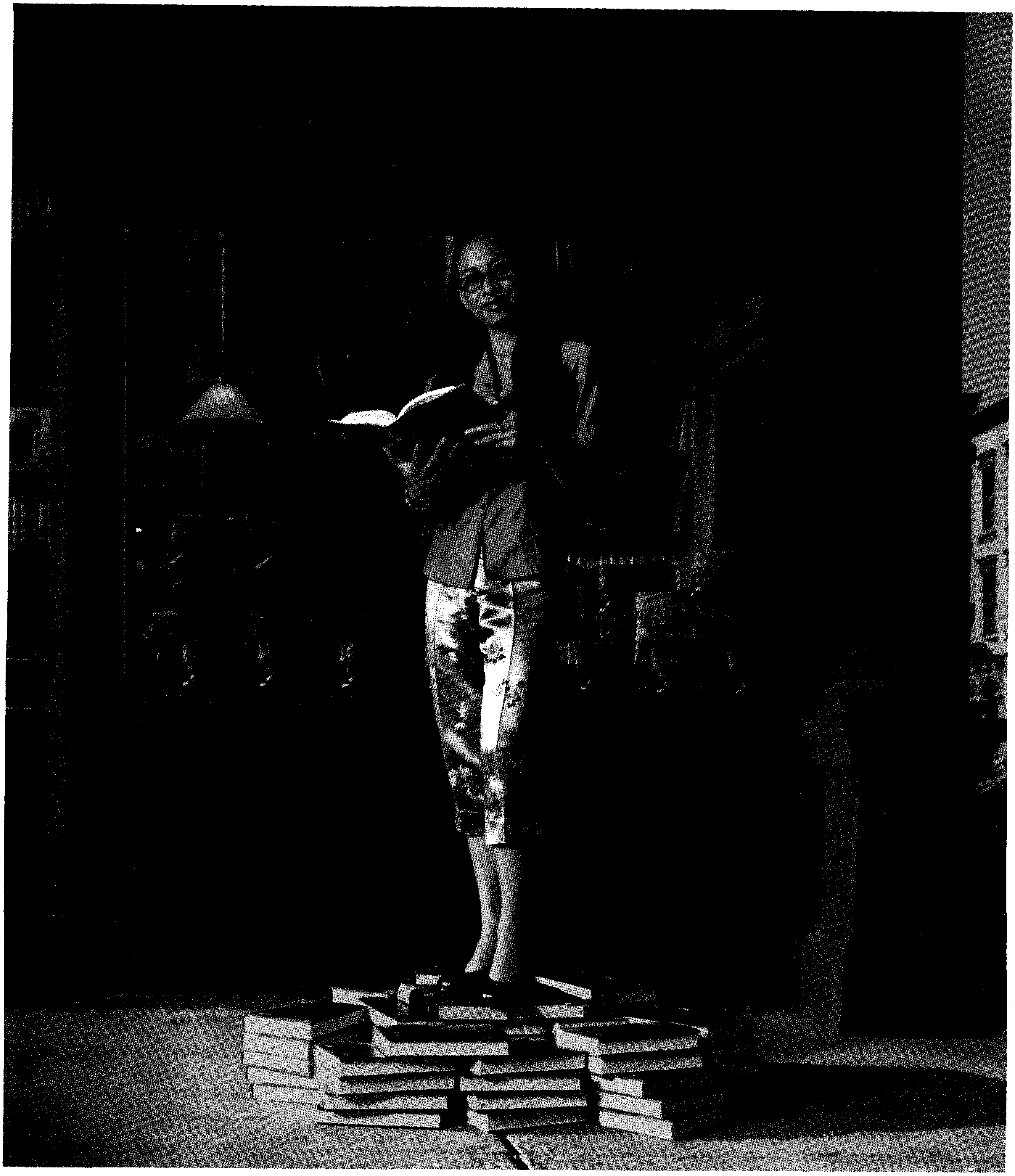

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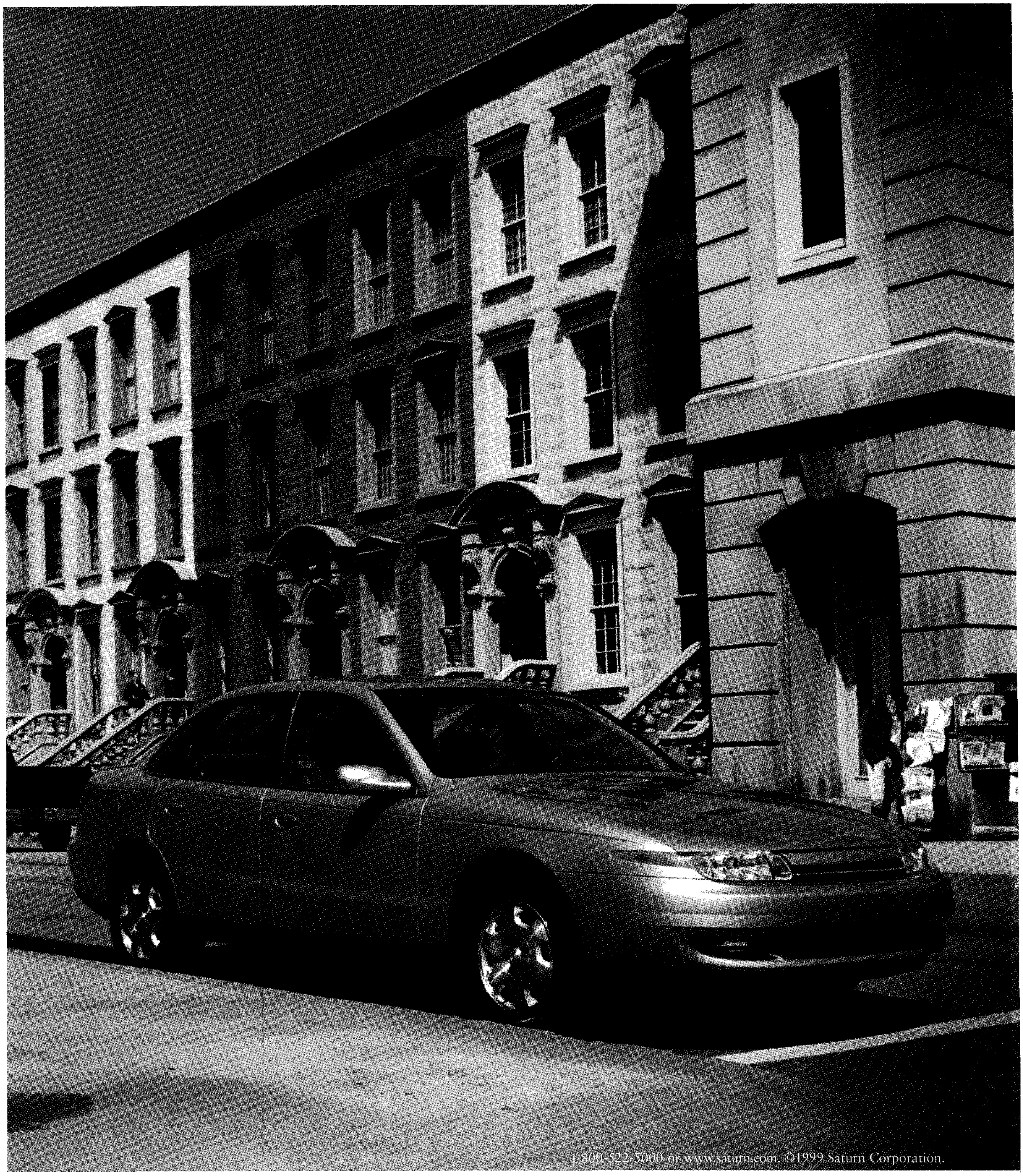

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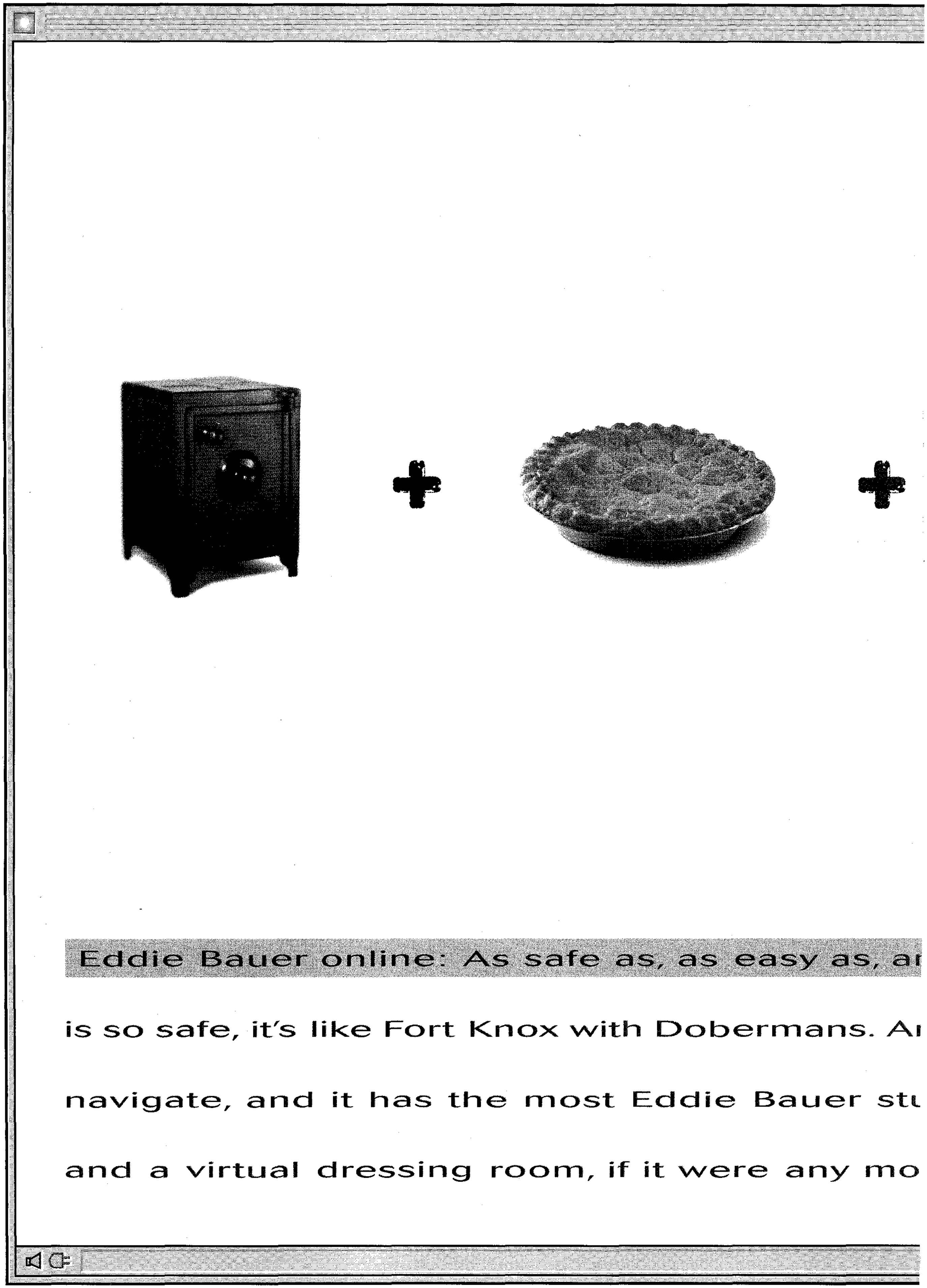

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COVER *Open-Minded Mayor, by Art Spiegelman*

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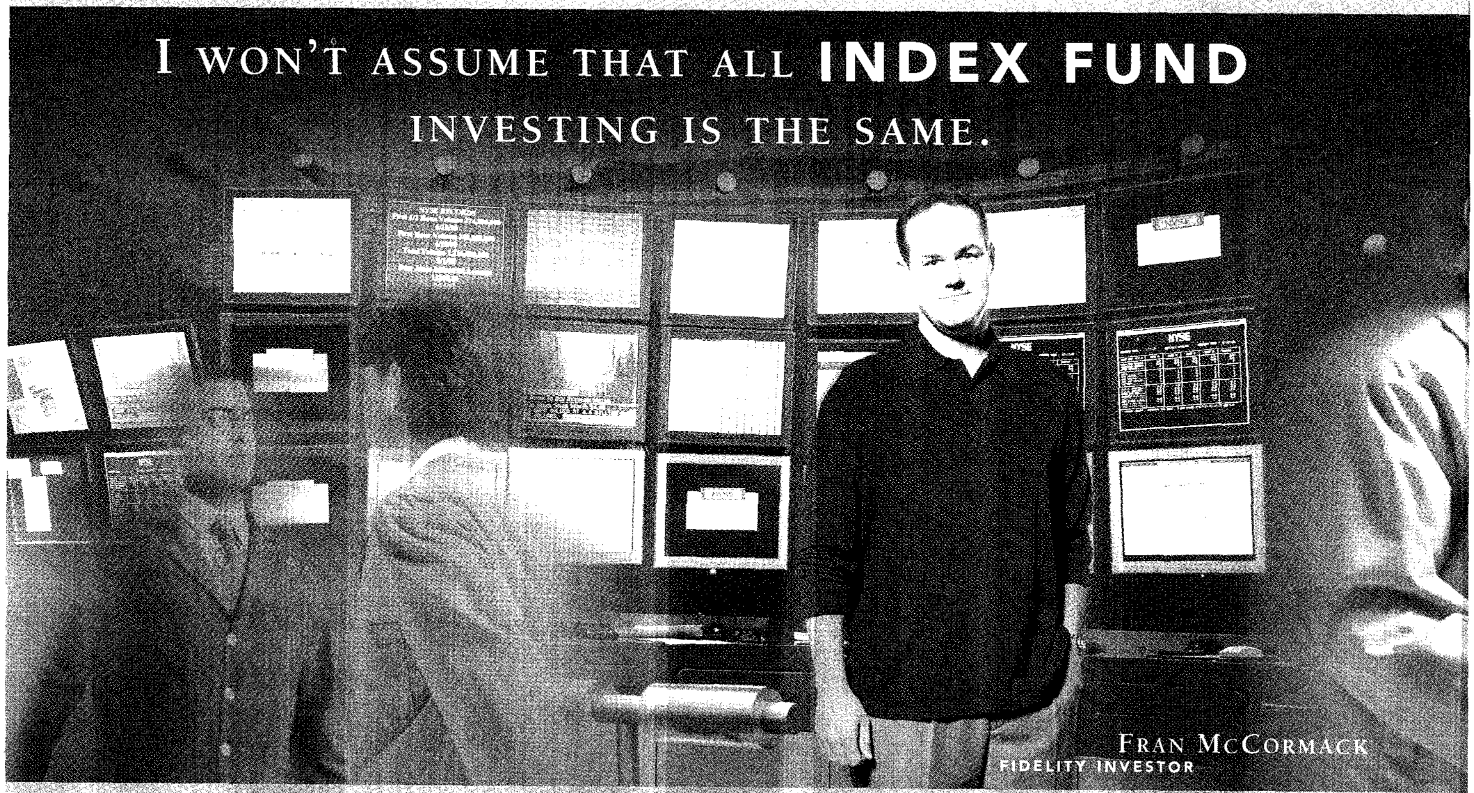
THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: Feb. 22 & Mar. 1, Apr. 26 & May 3, June 21 & 28, Aug. 23 & 30, Oct. 18 & 25, Dec. 27 & Jan. 3) by The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 4 Times Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXV, No. 30, October 11, 1999. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $42.00. In Canada, one year, $90.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $112.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, CO 80328-6447. PRINTED IN U.S.A.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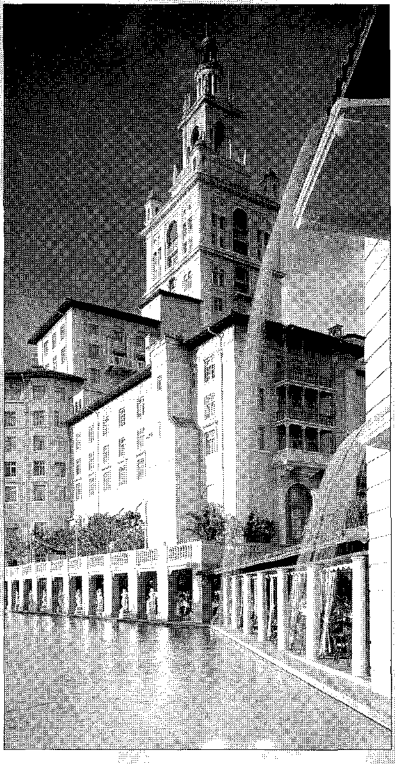

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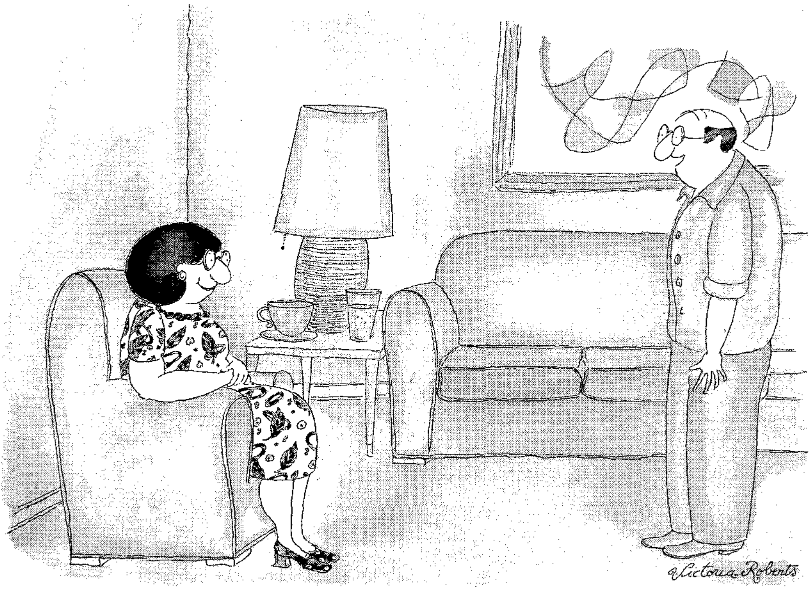

"You've hidden the mosquito repellent, haven't you, Martha?"

THE NEW YORKER, 4 TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036. David Carey, publisher; David L. Kahn, associate publisher; David M. May, associate publisher/Europe; Jeffrey Foley, advertising director; Joyce Castleberry, New York manager; Cristina Vittoria, advertising manager; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; James Oates, director of marketing and planning; Theresa Gaffney, director of promotion. For advertising inquiries, please call David L. Kahn at (212) 286-5611. THE NEW YORKER is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. © 1999 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of THE NEW YORKER. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc., published through its division The Condé Nast Publications Inc. S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Steven T. Florio, president and C.E.O.; Charles H. Townsend, executive vice-president; Catherine Viscardi Johnston, executive vice-president; Eric C. Anderson, executive vice-president/chief financial officer.

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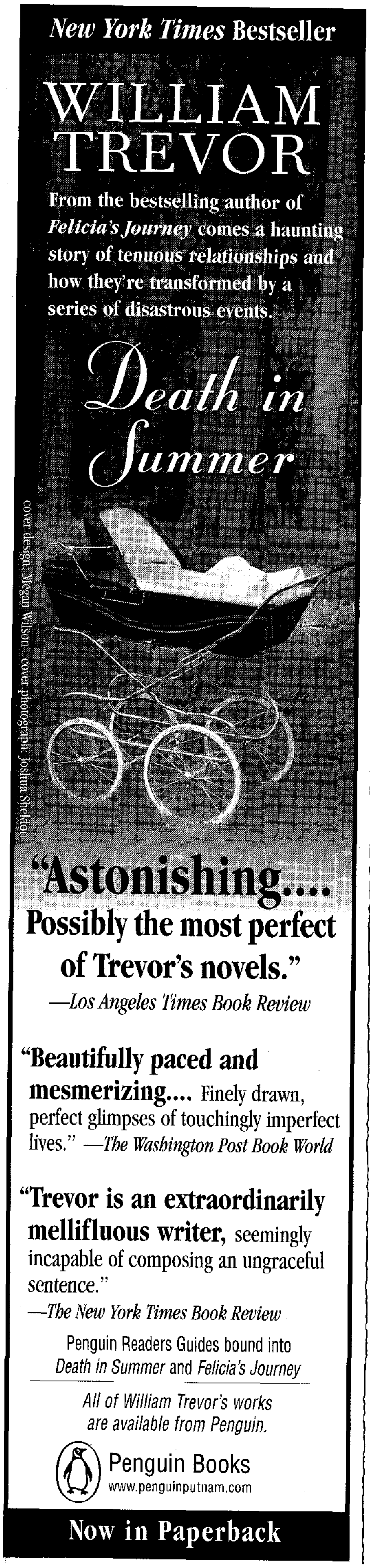
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THE MAIL

RELAX, DON'T DO IT

Jerome Groopman accurately portrays the discouraging state of the epidemic of human-papilloma-virus infection ("Contagion," September 13th). But he then writes, "The most effective way to protect against the papilloma virus and prevent anal and genital cancers would, of course, be a vaccine." Of course not! The most effective way to protect against the transmission of H.P.V. would be to change our sexual behaviors. And sexual behaviors, like other risk behaviors—cigarette smoking, for example—can be changed. Groopman admits that the development of a vaccine is questionable, at best. Focussing our efforts on changing societal norms to support and promote sexual abstinence until marriage would be the most effective way to combat H.P.V. infection and its sequelae.

CURTIS C. STINE, M.D.
Austin, Tex.

The technological advances in medicine often race far ahead of thoughtful clinical application. Performing a test is easy; explaining the implications of the result is the hard part. As Dr. Groopman states, neither treatment nor effective prevention for H.P.V. infection is known; the patient he describes is left to "wait, and hope it will pass." Given the current state of medical knowledge, the best use of H.P.V. testing may be to guide physicians in the evaluation of some women who have abnormal Pap smears. For other patients, medical practitioners must weigh the unclear benefits of telling someone who just wants to know whether or not he or she is infected against the anxiety, depression, and strain on relationships that knowledge of infection is likely to engender. H.P.V. testing is only the tip of the iceberg; testing of yet-to-be-determined usefulness is now available for a wide variety of medical conditions. The ability to test, measure, and quantify is seductive to the medical community. Understanding how the results will affect a patient's quality of life will be a major challenge to medical practitioners and, in this market-driven information age, to consumers as well.

GEORGE SAWAYA, M.D.
San Francisco, Calif.

CODE BREAKERS

David Denby must be aware of the exceptions to his statements about the Danish new wave, which eschews any "heightening of a scene or image," including sets, props, or electric lights (The Current Cinema, September 13th). Every movie nut knows that Lars von Trier's upcoming "The Idiot" shucks more than a few Dogma '95 conventions, and even Thomas Vinterberg's "The Celebration" sported an inventive dolly shot preceding "the couple fornicating on the bed," as Denby describes them. In other words, the signers of the Dogma '95 agreement care less than critics might think for strict adherence to their self-imposed stylistic restraints, even less for austerity, and not at all about failing on the way to forging a unique celluloid language.

ANDREW FENWICK
Hoboken, N.J.

NOTEPAPER FOR RUDY?

Mick Stevens's depiction of an art-supply store with an "elephant dung" shelf (October 4th) reminded me of an exotic-art-paper shop I visited once in a Cape Town mall. It sold large sheets of paper made from (deodorized) elephant dung. Twig-nubbly and rough-hewn, the paper was surprisingly handsome. Buffalo-dung paper was also available, you'll be glad to know, and it was every bit as appealing. Perhaps this is a new dimension in alternative waste-disposal technology, and a use for dung that even Jesse Helms couldn't object to.

DAVID ENGLISH
Somerville, Mass.

•

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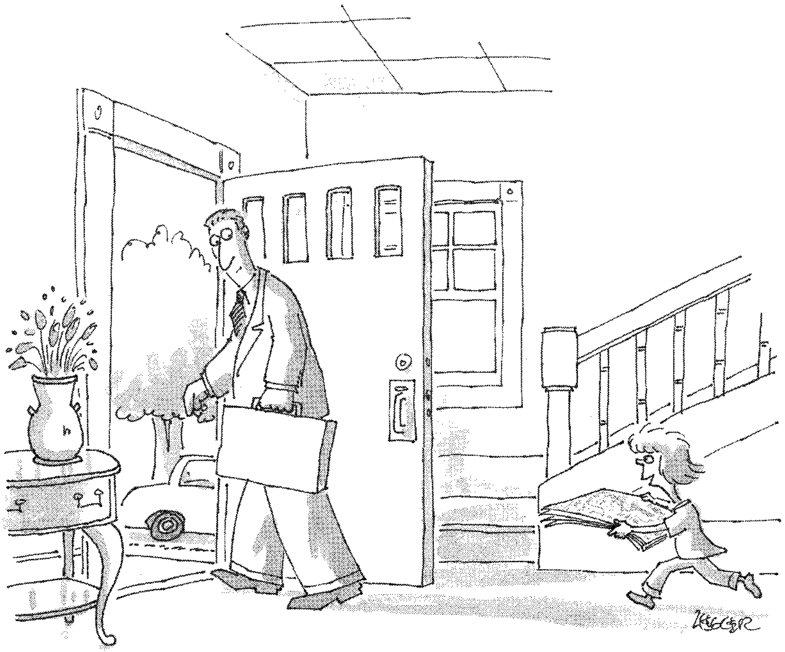

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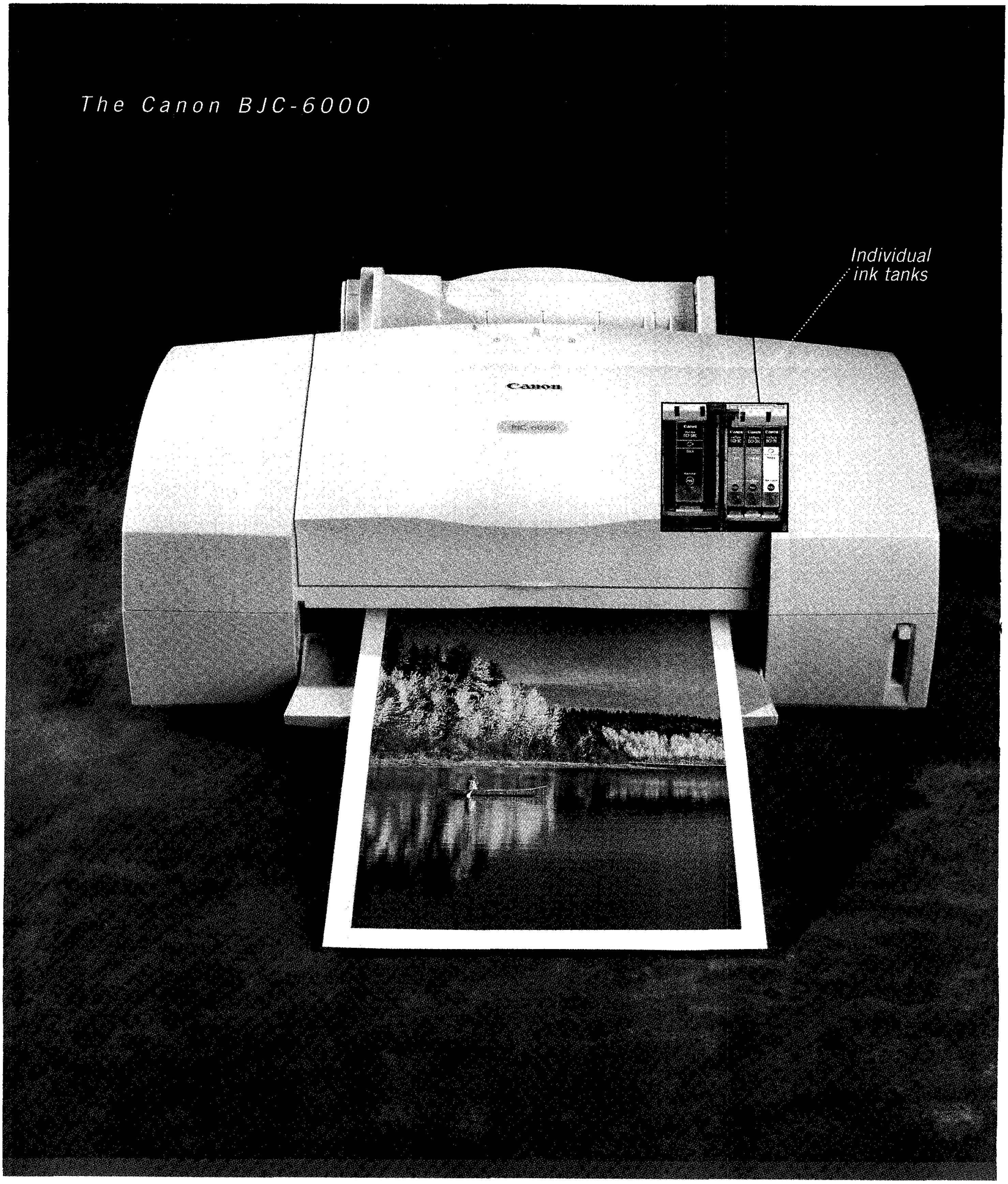

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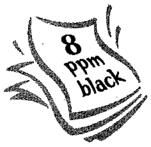

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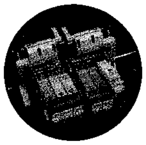

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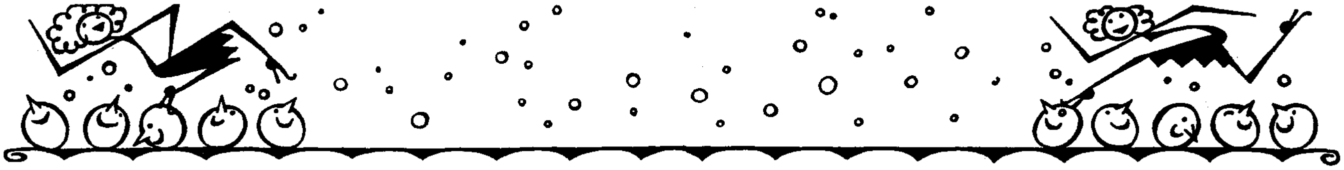

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Ancestral Voices—A staged reading, with a rotating cast, of A. R. Gurney's play, in which a Buffalo grandmother disrupts her family when she divorces her husband to marry his best friend. The first cast: David Aaron Baker, Philip Bosco, Blythe Danner, Edward Herrmann, and Elizabeth Wilson. Sundays at 7:30 and Mondays at 8. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Atlantic Theatre Company—The troupe celebrates its fifteenth year with a season of plays by co-founder David Mamet. First up: "The Water Engine" and "Mr. Happiness." In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)

Barefoot Boy with Shoes On—A man living in a ghetto apartment with his father, grandfather, and son tries to find a better life, in a drama by Edwin Sanchez. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4502.)

Brooklyn Academy of Music—Oct. 6-9 at 7:30 and Oct. 10 at 3: "The Whiteheaded Boy," the Irish playwright Lennox Robinson's 1916 comedy, staged by the Dublin troupe Barabas. . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 7:30: "Life Is a Dream," Calderón's seventeenth-century philosophical drama, about a prince imprisoned in a tower by his father, in a staging by Scotland's Royal Lyceum Theatre. Six performances only. Continues through Oct. 17. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

Chesapeake—In a new play by Lee Blessing, Mark Linn-Baker stars as a performance artist scheming to sabotage the right-wing politician who wants to cut his N.E.A. funding. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

The Clearing—The Blue Light Theatre Company's season opener is a drama by Helen Edmundson, set in Ireland during Cromwell's occupation, about the marriage of an English aristocrat and his Irish wife. Two previews on Oct. 6. Opens Oct. 7 at 7. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200.)

Contact—A dance-play about romantic dreams, told in three parts and set to the music of Stéphane Grappelli, Puccini, Benny Goodman, the Beach Boys, and the Squirrel Nut Zippers, among other musicians and composers. Co-conceived by Susan Stroman (choreography and direction) and John Weidman (book). Two previews on Oct. 6. Opens Oct. 7 at 6:45. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Cranes—Scott Elliott directs the New Group in a drama by Dmitry Lipkin, set in Baton Rouge in 1987, about two Russian-Jewish immigrant families who are reunited after years of estrangement. Previews begin Oct. 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Dame Edna: The Royal Tour—Calling all possums: the singer, swami, grief counsellor, and children's book illustrator makes her Broadway début. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

An Experiment with an Air Pump—Linda Emond, Daniel Gerroll, and Clea Lewis, among others, are in the cast of a new drama by Shelagh Stephenson. Doug Hughes is the director. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 313 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Gospel Is—A musical by Vy Higginsen and Ken Wydro, which traces the history of gospel. Previews begin on Oct. 9. (Williams Lafayette Theatre, 2225 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd., at 131st St. 280-1045.)

Gum—Daphne Rubin-Vega has the lead in a play by Karen Hartman, about the fate of two veiled women who succumb to the allure of forbidden Juicy Fruit. In previews. (Women's Project & Productions Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

James Joyce's The Dead—A musical version of the short story, starring Christopher Walken, Blair Brown, Stephen Spinella, Alice Ripley, Emily Skinner, Daisy Eagan, Paddy Croft, and John Kelley, among others. With a book by Richard Nelson, music by Shaun Davey, and lyrics by Mr. Nelson and Mr. Davey. Jack Hofsiss is the director. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Look Back in Anger—Classic Stage Company opens the season with a revival of John Osborne's 1956 drama, starring Reg Rogers, Enid Graham, Angelina Phillips, James Joseph O'Neill. Jo Bonney is the director. In previews. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210, ext. 10.)

Saturday Night Fever—The musical, based on the 1977 film. Directed and choreographed by Arlene Phillips. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Stars in Your Eyes—A musical by Chip Meyrelles, set in two small towns during the Kennedy Administration, in which the Man in the Moon (James Stovall) guides the lives of six people (John Braden, David M. Lutken, Heather Mac Rae, Crista Moore, Christy Carlson Romano, and Barbara Walsh. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

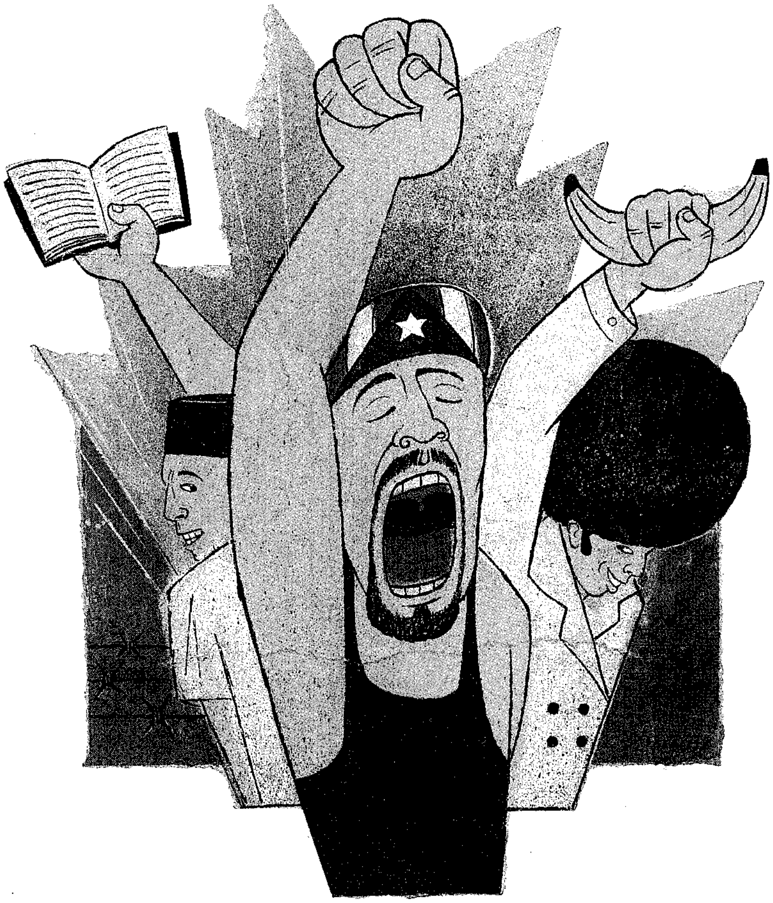
Avenue A—The 29th Street Rep's production of David Steen's drama about the effects of urban decay. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

The Beauty Part—S. J. Perelman's 1962 comedy, set in nineteen-fifties New York and Hollywood. (Bank Street Theatre, 155 Bank St. 591-0564. Closes Oct. 10.)

Big Blonde—Dorothy Parker's short story, adapted for the stage by Peter Mattaliano, who also directs, and starring Jennifer Spahr. (113 Gallery, 113 Ludlow St., between Delancey and Rivington Sts. 253-1813. Closes Oct. 10.)

Chekhov Now Festival—A three-week celebration offering contemporary stagings of twenty-one of the playwright's works. (Access Theatre, 380 Broadway, near White St. 414-7773. Closes Oct. 10.)

The Countess—Gregory Murphy's play, which tells the story of how the nineteenth-century art critic John Ruskin's wife left him for the painter John Everett Millais, is a vivid exploration of the self-indulgent pleasures of small-mindedness (in this case, Ruskin's and his parents'). The script is funny and intelligent, if a bit overlong, and the cast does a wonderful job of revealing the characters' complete in-



"Nuyorican Stories: Culture Clash in the City," at INTAR 53.

ability to communicate with each other, personally or artistically. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 594-2826.)

The Country Club—From the Drama Dept., a new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane, about a group of burned-out Wasps in their thirties, who gather during eleven holidays over the course of a year. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 541-8441.)

Epic Proportions—Kristin Chenoweth heads the cast of a new comedy by Larry Coen and David Crane, set in the thirties in the Arizona desert, during the filming of a Hollywood Biblical epic. Jerry Zaks is the director. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Exact Center of the Universe—Joan Vail Thorne's comedy, in which a small-town Southerner (Reed Birney) is torn between his overbearing mother (Frances Sternhagen) and his sweetheart (Tracy Thorne). (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Fully Committed—New York's most fashionable restaurant is the setting for Becky Mode's comedy. Nicholas Martin is the director. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3366.)

The Gathering—A Shabbat dinner set during the spring of Reagan's controversial visit to Bitburg (the German cemetery where, it is believed, Nazi soldiers are buried) turns into political crossfire between a Dachau survivor and his son, who is a speechwriter for the President. It could have been an overly burdened affair were it not for the comic tone of the tightly scripted first act. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 239-6200.)

Give Me Your Answer, Do!—Brian Friel's latest play, which centers on the rivalry between two writers. Presented by the Roundabout Theatre. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

Kat and the Kings—A rock-and-roll musical by Taliep Petersen and David Kramer, set in Cape Town in 1957, about a doo-wop group trying to make it big. Mr. Kramer is the director. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Mirandolina—The Pearl Theatre Company opens the season with Goldoni's 1753 comedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Necromance: A Night of Conjuration—The performance artist, storyteller, magician, and humorist Derek Hughes, in his latest work. Fridays and Saturdays, through Oct. 30. (Dixon Place, 309 E. 26th St. 532-1546.)

Nuyorican Stories: Culture Clash in the City—The comedy troupe Culture Clash (Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Siguenza) sends up New York art and politics of the past three decades, in an exploration of the lives of several well-known Puerto Rican, Chicano, and African-American figures. (INTAR 53, 508 W. 53rd St. 279-4200.)

The Right Size—In their show "Do You Come Here Often?," this pair of young English vaudevillians (Sean Foley and Hamish McColl) prove to be exhilarating new masters of an old zany art. As they try to reconstruct just how thay came to be trapped in a bathroom for twenty-five years, their flimflammery echoes the Old Guard of English funnymen—it's at once an homage to and a reinvention of the old-timers' shtick. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/27/99.) (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Oct. 10.)

Signature Theatre Company—The Maria Irene Fornes season begins with two one-acts, "Mud" and "Drowning," directed by David Esbjornson. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Ivo van Hove's staging of Tennessee Williams's play. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475. Closes Oct. 10.)

Sundays Out of Country—A cocktail party turns into a revealing series of play readings, in a comedy of manners by Judy Elkan. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Oct. 17.)

A Tale of Two Cities—A new adaptation of the Dickens novel, written and directed by Will Pomerantz, and staged in two parts. (The Salon, 49 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St. 539-3670. Closes Oct. 10.)

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy about a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving three pairs of lovers. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Thwak—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

The Vagina Monologues—Eve Ensler, in her one-woman disquisition. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Varla Jean Merman Is the Bad Seedling!—The TWEED Fractured Classicks series presents Ms. Merman (a.k.a. Jeffery T. Roberson) as the darkly naughty eight-year-old Rhonda Skidmore, in a musical parody of the Maxwell Anderson drama "The Bad Seed." (Mother, 432 W. 14th St. 358-3436.)

Voices in the Dark—In this age of computer-generated gore, the actress Judith Ivey, playwright John Pielmeier ("Agnes of God"), and director Christopher Ashley have achieved the impossible, a truly thrilling stage thriller. It's a classic plot: Ivey plays a radio-talk-show host who gets a call from a wacko, then heads off to an isolated cabin for a peaceful weekend—oops! (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

LeRoy "King of Art"

"Varla Jean Merman Is the Bad Seedling!," at Mother.

LEROY "KING OF ART"

The Winds of God—The premise of this Japanese import is weird: two shlumpy modern-day comedians are somehow reverse-reincarnated into the bodies of kamikaze pilots in the particularly inauspicious month of August 1945. But it works. The script (by Masayuki Imai, who also directed and stars) could use some trimming, but the play is, in the end, a brave study of Japanese culture. Imai examines how the obsession with societal honor which led pilots to volunteer for suicide missions seems to have evolved into selfishness and vapidity in the nineties; questions of what to believe, and how to believe, he implies, rarely come up. And much of the evening is very funny. Risu Matsumoto and Eijiro Ozaki are particularly strong, as one of the comedians and a pilot, respectively. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN: Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH OF A SALESMAN:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOSSE:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WEIR:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200 . . . . **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

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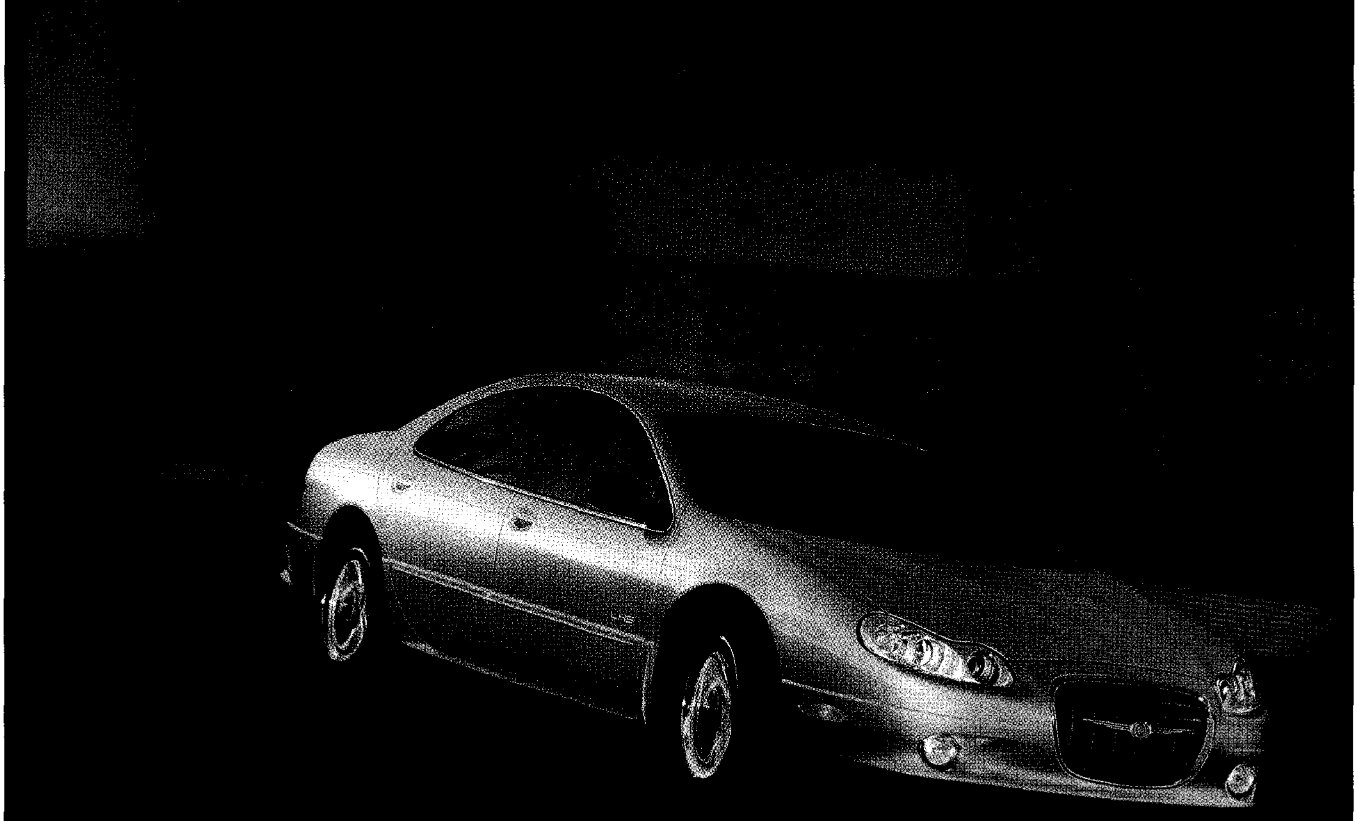

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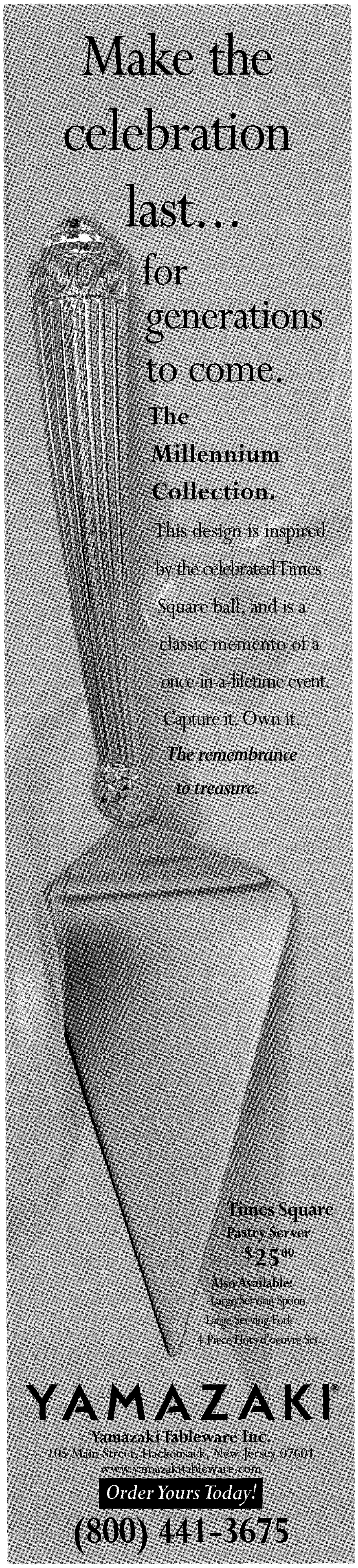
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DANCE

MIAMI CITY BALLET—Edward Villella's fifty-three-member company makes a tantalizingly brief stop in the metropolitan area: one evening (in which it performs Balanchine's complete "Jewels") and one afternoon (mixed repertory including more Balanchine—"Prodigal Son" and "Glinka Pas de Trois"—as well as works by Paul Taylor and Jimmy Gamonet de los Heros). (New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark. 888-466-5722. Oct. 9 at 8 and Oct. 10 at 3.)

PHILADANCO—The Philadelphia Dance Company performs works by Elisa Monte, Billy Wilson, Milton Myers, and George Faison. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Oct. 8 at 7, Oct. 9 at 2 and 7, and Oct. 10 at noon and 5.)

LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY—The fifty-two-year-old modern-dance troupe has been looking spryer than its peer group lately, a trend that continues with its current two-week program, which includes new works ("The Plain Sense of Things," by Doug Varone, and "Dark Elegies," by Antony Tudor), the re-creation of Sophie Maslow's "Champion," and three works by company founder José Limón. The opening-night gala honors Mikhail Baryshnikov, who is a year younger than the company and equally youthful. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 5-8 and Oct. 12 at 8, Oct. 9 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 10 at 2 and 7:30. Through Oct. 17.)

"A FUEGO LENTO"—The French tango company Quat'zarts presents a Gallic version of the Argentine dance, which, naturally, makes the erotic elements at once more explicit (clothes are shed) and more cerebral ("Women abandon themselves," according to *Le Figaro*, "but at the end manipulate men as they wish"). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 8-9 at 8, with a dance party following the performances, and Oct. 10 at 7.)

DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP—Oct. 7-8 at 8: Jean Vitrano in "Love's Body" and Nami Yamamoto in "H(a)i." . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 8 and Oct. 10 at 3: David Parker and the Bang Group in "Beatification." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

"NEW YORK ON NEW YORK"—Three programs by twelve New York choreographers, featuring works on aspects of the love-hate relationship we all seem to have with the city. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 8-10 at 8:30.)

"LAVA LOVE"—Sarah East Johnson's troupe, Lava, presents a slate of circus-skill routines—trapeze and balancing acts, hoop diving, human pyramids, hula-hoop and pogo-stick numbers—performed with subtleties of pace and emphasis taken from the world of dance. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051. Oct. 7-8 at 8 and Oct. 9 at 3 and 8. Through Oct. 30.)

"MR. REMOTE"—The dancer and performance artist Charles Dennis performs two solos. The title work presents the gratifying relationship between a man and his remote control; "Me & My Dad & TV" investigates autobiographical elements of the aforesaid romance. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 7-10 at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

TONY BENNETT—His new album, "Tony Bennett Sings Ellington Hot & Cool," is a gem, and there's no reason why this show should be anything less. Bennett's resurgence has stimulated a late-career vocal glow that shades each note in bracing amber tones. Give him a great song—and he will have many this night—and no one can touch him. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 6 at 8.)

PHISH—Vermont's favorite laid-back, jam-happy combo has expertly filled the void left by the demise of the Dead—and they've done it without a single radio hit. (Nassau Coliseum. 516-794-9300. Oct. 7-8 at 7:30.)

José (el Canario) Alberto, at S.O.B.'s.

PHIL WOODS AND SLIDE HAMPTON—The alto saxophonist who breathes bop joins forces with the trombonist and arranger. Pianist Valerie Capers will also lend a hand. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Oct. 7 at 8.)

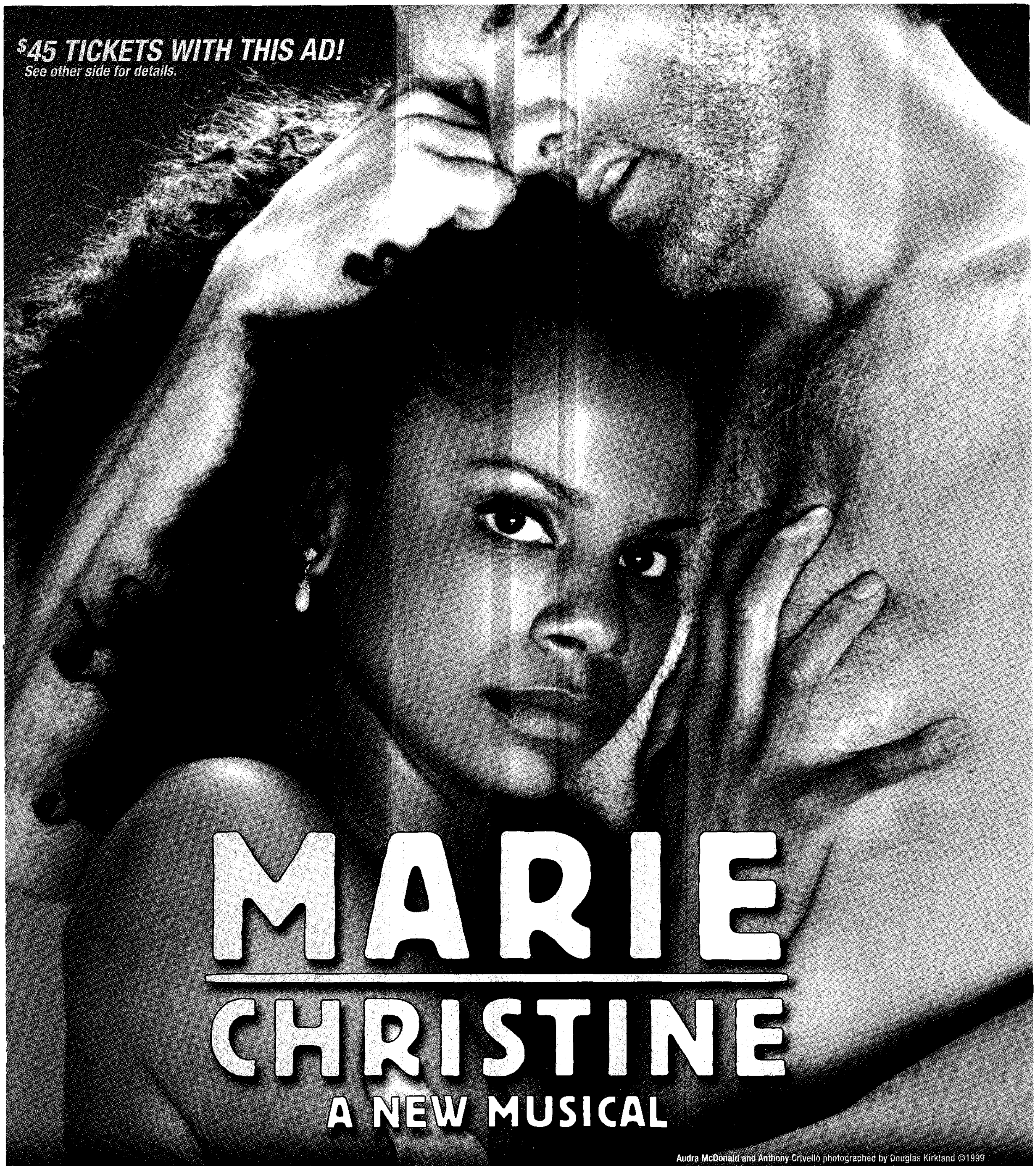
ERIC REED—The fleet-fingered young pianist, who tips his hat to Gotham with his new release, "Manhattan Melodies." (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 875-5599. Oct. 7-9 at 8.)

JAMES HURT QUARTET—"Dark Grooves Mystical Rhythms," this daring young pianist's recent début recording, attempts far too much and may not be the best introduction to his work. In performance, though, Hurt's talent and focus come to the fore. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9480. Oct. 8 at 5:30.)

ZZ TOP / LYNYRD SKYNYRD—The funky Texas trio and the surviving members of the band that wrote "Freebird," "Sweet Home Alabama," and other Southern-rock classics. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Oct. 8 at 7:30.)

"NETAID CONCERT"—Perhaps taking inspiration from the way an on-line search for information can result in a strange, seemingly unre-

$45 TICKETS WITH THIS AD!
See other side for details.



MARIE CHRISTINE

A NEW MUSICAL

Audra McDonald and Anthony Crivello photographed by Douglas Kirkland ©1999

Lincoln Center Theater presents MARIE CHRISTINE a new musical by Michael John LaChiusa with (in alphabetical order)

Franz C. Alderfer Ana Maria Andricain Michael Babin Brent Black Sherry Boone Anthony Crivello Mary Bond Davis
Darius de Haas Donna Dunmire Shawn Elliott Andrea Frierson-Toney André Garner Lovette George Keith Lee Grant
Rosena M. Hill Kim Huber Kimberly JaJuan Mark Lotito Joy Lynn Matthews Michael McCormick Audra McDonald
Janet Metz Monique Midgette Vivian Reed Peter Samuel Mary Testa Jennifer Leigh Warren Jim Weaver

sets Christopher Barreca costumes Toni-Leslie James lighting Jules Fisher & Peggy Eisenhauer
orchestrations Jonathan Tunick musical director David Evans sound Scott Stauffer
directed and choreographed by Graciela Daniele

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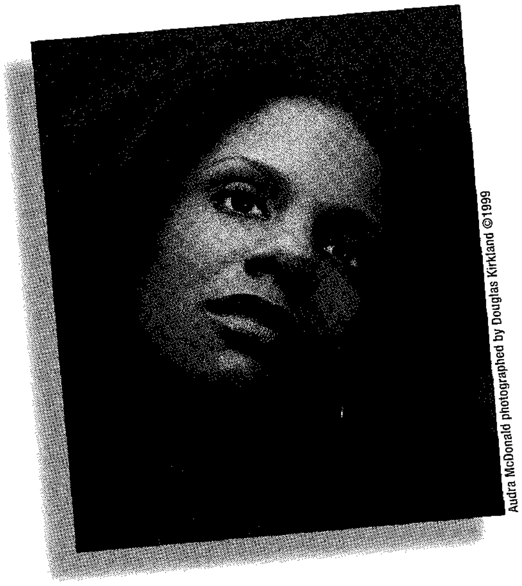
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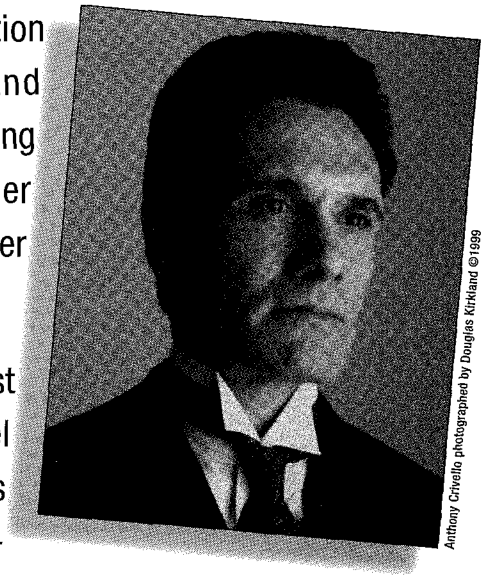
MARIE CHRISTINE

A NEW MUSICAL

Here's an offer to see the most anticipated new musical of the season for just $45 (you save up to 40%). MARIE CHRISTINE is a musical fable of forbidden love, race, sex and political ambition set in New Orleans and Chicago in the 1890s. A tragic and passionate tale of a young black woman (3-time Tony winner Audra McDonald) and her all-consuming love for the man who betrays her (Tony winner Anthony Crivello).

MARIE CHRISTINE is a serious work, written by one of the best of the new generation of musical theater creators, Michael John LaChiusa *(Hello Again, Chronicle of a Death Foretold).* It is a large-scale musical with a cast of 30 and a 17-piece orchestra staged by director/choreographer Graciela Daniele, whose trailblazing career includes the currently running *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Ragtime*.


Anthony Crivello photographed by Douglas Kirkland ©1999

Tickets for MARIE CHRISTINE are expected to be among the most sought after of the Broadway season, but you can get them now at the special advance price of $45 for performances (except Sat. evening) from Oct. 28th through Dec. 1st with this ad. Bring it to the Lincoln Center Theater box office in person or call Tele-Charge 212-947-8844 and mention code MCDMX23.

Please note: The role of Marie Christine will be performed by Sherry Boone at all Wednesday & Saturday matinees, and Nov. 26 matinee, Dec. 26 matinee, Dec. 30 & Dec. 31. Tickets subject to availability. Limit six tickets per order.

MARIE CHRISTINE is supported by a generous grant from The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Theatre Foundation for new musical works at Lincoln Center Theater.
The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation has provided a generous grant for MARIE CHRISTINE.
Lincoln Center Theater gratefully acknowledges extraordinary support from The Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Fund for Lincoln Center, established by the founders of The Reader's Digest Association.
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lated collection of Web sites, this benefit for Netaid, a charity devoted to world poverty founded by the computer company Cisco Systems and the United Nations Development Programme, brings together an eclectic mix of performers, including rapper Busta Rhymes, Algerian pop star Cheb Mami, the alternative rockers Counting Crows, Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page, the soulful, evocative singer Mary J. Blige, chairman of the board Puff Daddy, the former schoolteacher Sting, Fugees stalwart Wyclef Jean (who will be joined by Bono), and the Italian blues guitarist Zucchero. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Oct. 9 at 5.)

Mehr and Sher Ali—Performing the melismatic, trance-inducing grooves of Pakistani devotional music. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 9 at 8.)

Styx—America's favorite mid-seventies progressive-rock act (with the possible exception of Kansas) returns—with original guitarist and vocalist James Young. Keyboardist Denis DeYoung, the helium-throated singer of "Babe," will not be in attendance. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Oct. 10 at 8.)

Hono-Taiko—Japan's only female troupe of taiko drummers sweat and flex their muscles onstage as they engage in a male-dominated art form derived from ancient Japanese battlefield rituals. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 11 at 7.)

Ottmar Liebert—The German flamenco guitarist. (Town Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Jimmy Page and the Black Crowes—An evening with the swaggering Led Zeppelin guitarist, backed by the Southern-fried retro sound of Chris Robinson and co. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 12-13 at 8.)

CLUBS

(Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

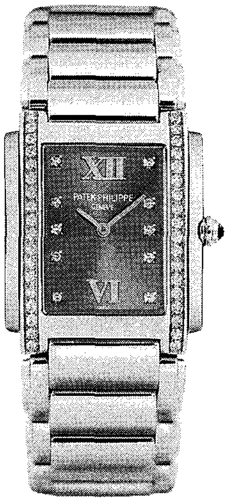
Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 6: A festival of Gypsy and Hungarian folk music. Oct. 10: **10,000 MANIACS.** Long since estranged from singer Natalie Merchant, the Maniacs have reverted to being an upstate-New York bar band.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Oct. 9: The Austin, Texas, honky-tonk band the **DERAILERS.** Oct. 11: **LES NUBIANS.** The sisters Hélène and Celia Faussart, who were raised in Bordeaux (with a brief sojourn in Chad), reconfigure American hip-hop and jazz with a severe Continental chic. The duo's sophisticated styling does for pop music what Catherine Deneuve did for umbrellas. Oct. 12: **PAULA COLE.** Though she lacks the precision of, say, Tori Amos or the loony languor of Fiona Apple (Cole's singing too often suffers from a stiff, music-school perfectionism), she's still a gifted songwriter and a genuine star. With Moroccan sintir player **HASSAN HAKMOUN.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Oct. 8-9: **GUITAR SHORTY.** This Texas bluesman cut his first singles in the late fifties, around the time that Otis Rush and Buddy Guy were making their débuts. But recording tape has never fully captured the excitement of his live act.

Double Happiness, 173 Mott St. (941-1282)—This subterranean hideaway takes its name from the Chinese character representing harmony between a bride and groom, and since its opening last year it has been a fine marriage of alluring crowd and intriguing environment. Patrons sip green-tea Martinis at corner tables, slink through tiled passageways, or retire to a cushion-lined skylit alcove room. As with newlyweds, much of the fun here comes in discovering hidden qualities.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Oct. 8-9: **JOE MCGINTY'S LOSER'S LOUNGE** pays playful homage to the music of Fleetwood Mac. Oct. 12: The singer-songwriter **NONA HENDRYX** is a regal, buff performer, always ready to bare her psyche. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.



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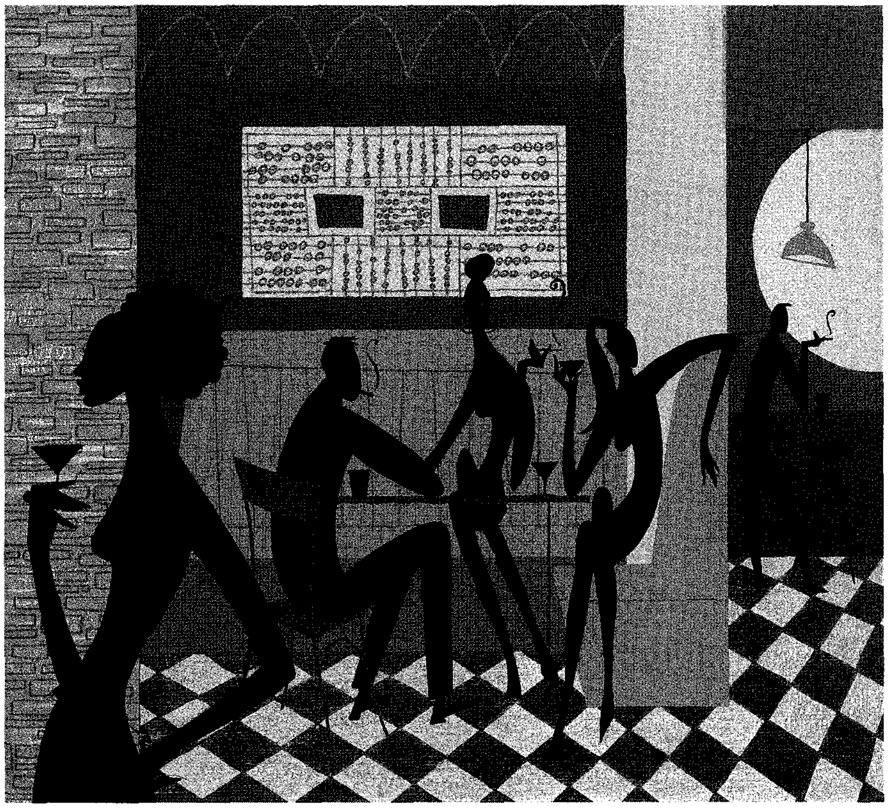
Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 6-7: **ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN.** Back in the heady days of New Wave, most acts were known for their synthesizer sounds and the height of their hair styles. Although the Bunnymen paid plenty of attention to those elements, they carved out a memorable niche, specializing in a languid pretension that owed more to Kurt Weill than to Depeche Mode. Its latest release, "What Are You Going to Do with Your Life?," demonstrates that its sound has aged surprisingly well. Oct. 8: High-grade roots reggae with **ISRAEL VIBRATION.** Oct. 9: Jazzy pop with the **SAMPLES.** Oct. 12: The faceless English synth collective **ART OF NOISE,** best known for impossibly subtle aural confections, makes a rare live appearance. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 6 in the intimate Old Office space: **HEATHER EATMAN** is a guitar-slinging spiky-haired New York City transplant from Jacksonville, Texas, with a wispy, smoky voice and a serious talent for writing compelling songs. She spent the past four years opening for such artists as John Prine, Jill Sobule, Billy Bragg, and John Haitt. These days, when she's not working as a graphic artist for the *Daily News*, she's running her own label, Impossible Records, out of her Greenwich Village apartment. Her latest release, "Candy & Dirt," recalls Beth Orton's "Central Reservation" in its postmodern folk. Oct. 7: A former Blake Baby, **JULIANA HATFIELD** doesn't particularly enjoy being a girl, but some people relish her tales of post-feminist self-loathing and post-adolescent ennui.



Lounging in Chinatown, at Double Happiness.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Oct. 9: Former Buffalo Tom front man **BILL JANOVITZ.** Oct. 12: The jangly sounds of Minneapolis's **THE HANG UPS,** whose latest release, "Second Story," was produced by Don Dixon and Mitch Easter, who also produced R.E.M.'s album "Murmur." Also on Oct. 12: Drummer **ROBERT CRENSHAW,** Marshall's brother, stops by with his own brand of American pop.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—Oct. 11: Blues guitarist **BILL SIMS,** whose family life is currently the subject of the ten-part PBS series "An American Love Story."

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Oct. 6-7: The queen of salsa, **CELIA CRUZ,** is a flamboyant performer (and dresser), with an electrifying stage presence and an unerring vocal command. Her opening act, **JOSÉ (EL CANARIO) ALBERTO,** is a forty-one-year-old Dominican-born singer who first met Cruz back when he was with the seminal New York City salsa band Típica 73. He's been touring with her for the past ten years, picking up experience money can't buy. If Cruz occupies the throne, Alberto is easily the crown prince.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Oct. 7: **BASEMENT BHANGRA,** an evening of ecstatic, futuristic dance music which fuses an ancient Punjabi harvest festival with the technological wonders of underground London. Oct. 9: Hardcore legends **AGNOSTIC FRONT.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Bam Café, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—Oct. 8: One of Boston's finest jazz vocalists, **TÍTILAYO NGWENYA** has a self-released début album, "Beware the Short Hair Girl," which reinvigorates a form that can suffer in the work of less talented singers.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Oct. 6-7: The **RENEE ROSNES TRIO.** Before our eyes, the Canadian expatriate pianist Rosnes has steadily evolved into a confident stylist whose taste and touch set her apart. Oct. 8-9: **MARIAN MC PARTLAND'S HICKORY HOUSE TRIO.** As jazz institutions go, the octogenarian McPartland is still pretty frisky. This grande dame has been a steadying force on the New York scene for six decades; time flies when you're upholding the virtues of mainstream piano. Joined here by bassist **BILL CROW** and drummer **JOE MORELLO,** McPartland reassembles the streamlined trio that knocked 'em dead back in the mid-fifties. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 10: **MAYNARD FERGUSON AND BIG BOP NOUVEAU.** See Maynard trot out his umpteenth band. Hear him hit notes best appreciated by Labradors. Watch as he pulls in tourists. Give him points for consistency, though—he knows what they want, and he gives it to them every time. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 10: The **AHMAD JAMAL** trio. Instead of mellowing with time, Jamal gets more eccentric. A charming minimalist back in the fifties, the pianist has metamorphosed into a verbose extrovert with his own game plan of stop-and-start rhythms, mood-swing digressions, and catch-me-if-you-can shenanigans with his sidemen. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Oct. 6-10: The **GARY BARTZ** quartet. The return of saxophonist Bartz is a feel-good tale for the nineties: a comer from the glory days of the late sixties returns, his powers intact, with a solid commitment to straight-ahead swing. On an inspired night, when he feels like parading his harmonic knowledge and his dive-bomber drive, Bartz can be staggering.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—Oct. 7-9 and Oct. 11-13: Chanteuse **UTE LEMPER.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 6: If you've followed the career of the brilliant saxophonist Joe Lovano, you also know who **JUDI SILVANO** is. Popping up regularly on her husband's recordings, this eager soprano adds an unexpected tonal flavor that is not to everyone's taste. Fortunately, though, she's no preening traditionalist; if she errs, it's on the side of experimentation. Oct. 7-10: Boston's best-kept secret is slipping out of the bag as saxophonist **GEORGE GARZONE,** a respected teacher and daredevil improviser, is putting in more frequent appearances here. With his longtime trio, the Fringe, intuiting his every labyrinthine move, Garzone slips in and out of conventional forms like a jazz Houdini. Oct. 8: It's probably best to avoid defining the threads that bind guitarist **MARC RIBOT,** bassist **JAMALADEEN TACUMA,** and saxophonist **JOHN ZORN,** and just try to keep up with the sonic ruckus they weave. Oct. 9-10: For an Irish-Jewish kid from the Bronx, **KIP HANRAHAN** surely knows his tropical rhythms. With a small army of Latin percussionists and vocalists, fortified by ringers like **CHARLES NEVILLE** on saxophone, musical director Hanrahan's Deep Rumba band fuses Afro-Cuban multirhythmic bliss with New York-style angst. Oct. 11: Clarinettist **DON BYRON** gets freaky with his band Existential Dred.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Oct. 10: The **OLIVER LAKE STEEL QUINTET.** As a mainstay of the World Saxophone Quartet, saxophonist and flutist Lake may be a linchpin of the avant-garde jazz tradition, but he's also got an undeniable Caribbean-music jones. His group Jump Up takes on reggae, and his steel band incorporates steel drums and island rhythms into the jazz mix. A strong bass-and-drum team—**REGGIE WASHINGTON** and **PHEEROAN AKLAFF**—keeps things hopping. Dining.

Up Over Jazz Cafe, 351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Oct. 8: Trumpeter **DUANE EUBANKS,** the younger brother of Kevin and Robin, leads his quartet.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Oct. 10: The **RUSSELL MALONE** quartet. Why does guitarist Malone make other fretmen fret? Ample technique aside, it could be his sweeping grasp of jazz styles which has allowed him to blend as easily with such swing and neo-swing masters as Bucky Pizzarelli and Diana Krall as he does with fervent boppers like Roy Hargrove. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

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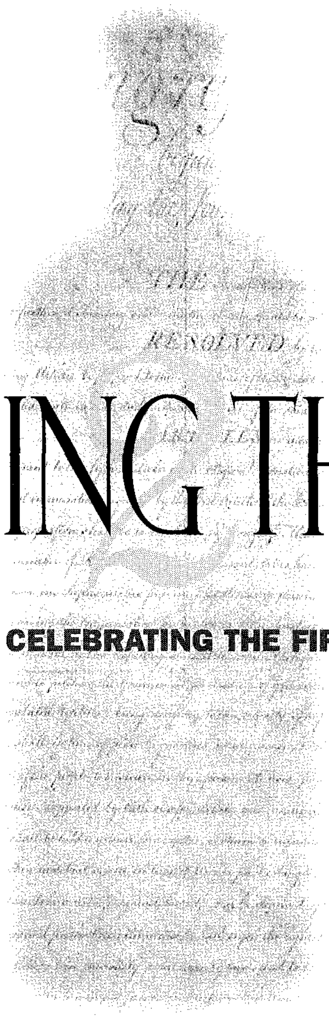

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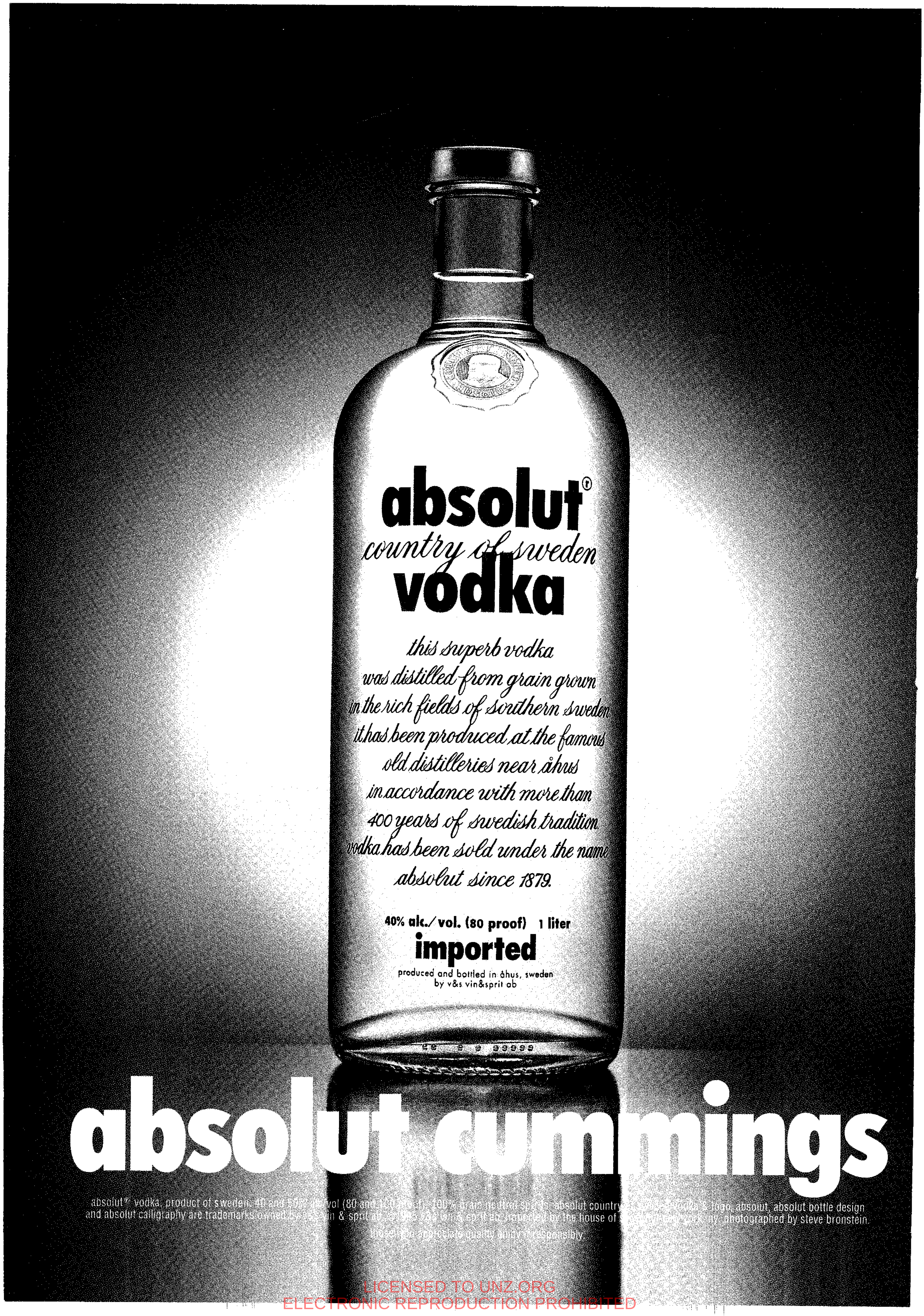
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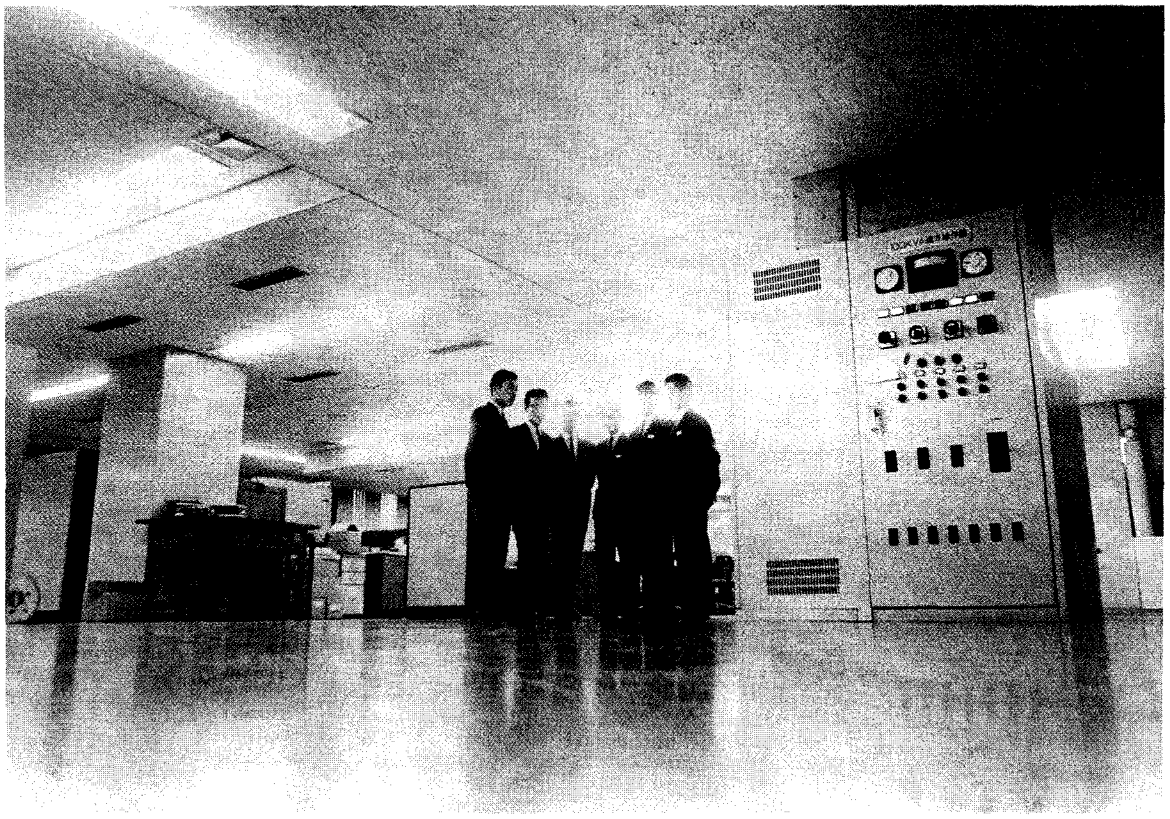

"Computer Age" (1966), by Daido Moriyama, at the Japan Society (see also the Metropolitan Museum).

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Oct. 7: The exceptional Cuban singer and guitarist **JUAN-CARLOS FORMELL.** Saturdays and *Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.*

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch" *offers forty paintings and ninety-*two drawings of the nineteenth-century French élite. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ "Carleton Watkins: The Art of Perception" presents more than a hundred and twenty-five images by this pioneer of photography, who recorded the vastness of the American West. Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ "Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids," a sombre and ravishing survey of five hundred years of the millennia of Egyptian dynasties, covers the Old Kingdom (2650-2150 B.C.), the glorious formative period of Pharaonic art when the great pyramids were built and religious statuary rose to a refined naturalism. It's a big show, with more than two hundred and fifty carved stone figures and reliefs borrowed from thirty museums, but the presentation feels spare and clear. Among the most stunning pieces is a seated sumo-size figure of Hemiunu, the probable architect of the Great Pyramid of Giza, whose dimpled navel and swollen breasts are the world's earliest—and certainly most majestic—record of middle-aged spread. At the other end of the social spectrum, the show includes a few of the rare representations of ordinary Egyptians, including a potter, a butcher, and a cook glumly dropping a hoof into a cauldron of stew. Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ A companion to the Ingres portraits exhibition, "Costume and Character in the Age of Ingres" gathers examples of the court fashions popular in the artist's heyday. Through Nov. 21. . . . ¶ "Daido Moriyama: Hunter," an exhibition of forty photographs made in postwar Japan. Through Jan. 2. (See also the Japan Society.) (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—*On Oct. 7, the museum opens its* three-part blockbuster, "MOMA 2000," with "Modern Starts," which samples art from 1880 to 1920. Even this curatorial division is subdivided: the first portion, "People," installed on the second floor, focusses on figurative work by Matisse, Picasso, Redon, Munch, Léger, and other colossi of early modernism. Neighboring floors will house "Places" *(opening Oct. 28) and* "Things" (Nov. 21). (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—A retrospective devoted to the Neapolitan painter Francesco Clemente presents more than two hundred paintings, frescoes, watercolors, pastels, sculptures, illustrations, and collaborative works. Opens Oct. 8. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The second half of America's mid-career retrospective, covering art from 1950 to now, has just opened, with a list of works that will supply fodder for art-world argument for the next few months and into the subsequent century. Through Feb. 13. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—At the center of the new Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth is an eight-foot hemispherical model of our mother ship, rigged with an internal projection system that displays her clouds, oceans, and continents, all in motion. Ranged around it are a hundred and sixty-eight chunks of the planet itself. . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition." Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection," the provocative show from London's Royal Academy in London, offers paintings, sculptures, photographs, and installations by Damien Hirst (of the sliced mammals), the Chapman Brothers (randomly situated genitalia), Jenny Saville, Mona Hatoum, Rachel Whiteread, and other baddies from the sceptered isle. . . . ¶ "Winslow Homer: Illustrating America." Through Oct. 10. (Open Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (832-1155)—"Daido Moriyama: Stray Dog" presents a *hundred and thirty photographs by the Japanese* artist. Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Luisa Caldwell—"Cow Palace," an installation inspired by the artist's recent visit to northern India, is a theatrical homage to Mughal culture by way of the Pattern and Decoration movement. Architectural elements such as scenic flats, florid wallpaper, and a free-standing arch are punctuated by a beaded mandala, bronze weights cast in the shape of a bell or lotus, and a pair of tables whose colored-resin tops encase strings of beads. The back gallery features a psychedelic video projection. The various components fail to come together: the show's centerpiece, a life-size fibreglass sacred cow, could just as well have been a white elephant. Through Oct. 16. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. 879-3500.)

Bruce McCall—In the tongue-in-cheek retro utopianism of this frequent *New Yorker* contributor, skies are typically blue: Prussian blue over an improbably highbrow Times Square, cerulean over a rousing game of tank polo. Even when the skies turn sepia—as they do in "New York's Transportation Future," a ferry-port scene filled with pedicabs and electric buses—it's an oddly sunny sepia. McCall's tomorrowland vistas, filled with military and civilian flying machines and luxury liners rendered in the style of

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fifties architectural drawings, bring back all the zany earnestness once perpetrated in the name of progress. Through Oct. 16. (James Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. 593-3737.)

JUAN MUÑOZ—Three new series of sculptures by this brilliant if melancholy Spaniard. The gallery, which could be more aptly termed a compound since its renovation last year, is tailor-made for Muñoz, whose work occupies its rooms the way dreams can haunt your waking hours. The north gallery is populated by "Blotter Figures," five androgynous humanoids of gray polyester resin who look like versions of the Mummy by De Chirico. Though static, the figures suggest twisting motion, like Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase." Two are clearly paired, but the rest are solitary, and the mood, underscored by the presence of rusted steel shutters on the wall, is one of isolation. Grouped in the corner of the adjacent room are "The Crossroads Cabinets," which house an enigmatic collection of steel and Lucite switchblades, noirish vignettes of male and female figures in lead, and blue pool cues, among other things. A photo-mural of a tenement façade dominates the south gallery, where two slanting Corten-steel staircases sit atop pedestals. The side of each piece has been cut away to reveal a Lilliputian back alley, crisscrossed with clotheslines, a reminder of childhood fears about what lurks under the stairs. Through Oct. 30. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Open Mondays.)

SHORT LIST—**JAMES BARSNESS,** Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through Nov. 13. . . . **PHILIPPE FAVIER,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Oct. 23. . . . **CISCO JIMINEZ,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5150. Through Oct. 23. . . . **YURI KUPER,** Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. 265-8876. Through Nov. 6. . . . **HOLLY LANE,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Oct. 16. . . . **BARRY LE VA** and **THERESA CHONG,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Both shows through Oct. 16. . . . **RUTH MARTEN,** Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. Through Nov. 6. . . . **TOM SACHS,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through Oct. 25. . . . **SAUL STEINBERG,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through Oct. 30. . . . **FRANCISCA SUTIL,** Haime, 41 E. 57th St. 888-3550. Open Mondays; through Nov. 6. . . . **JACQUES VILLEGLÉ,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Oct. 23. . . . **STEVE WHEELER,** York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through Oct. 23. . . . **RAY YOSHIDA,** Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338. Through Oct. 9. . . . **JACK YOUNGERMAN,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through Oct. 30.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

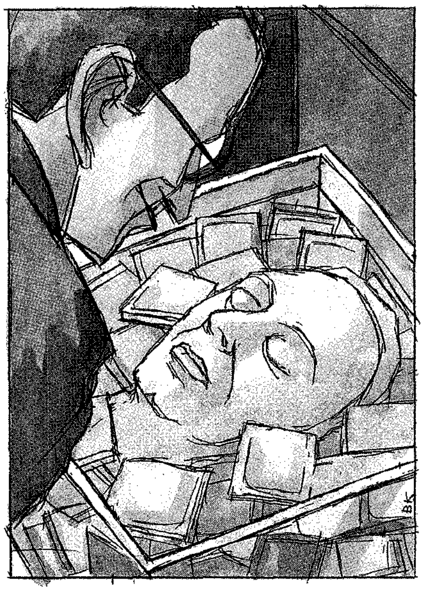
DIANA COOPER—Meandering constructions, at once intricate and whimsical, like the 3-D doodlings of a genius sixth grader. Built from a host of PlaySkool-inspired art materials, including foam core, pipe cleaners, cellophane, and pompoms, Cooper's geometric fantasies generally reach, vine-fashion, into the viewer's space or spill out onto the floor. Cooper's last show generated widespread acclaim; this one is better. Through Oct. 9. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323.)

JOY EPISALLA—This artist treats her own photographs the way sculptors treat their raw materials: she arranges them on the floor, stacks them, and sometimes even—why not?—installs them on the walls. The photographs themselves are mostly closeups of domestic objects, enlarged to the point where they become seductively grainy and unfamiliar. A four-foot-long brass zipper looks oddly at home on the gallery's concrete floor. Two soiled white pillows, shot in a cool greenish light, have the bulky grace of sea-cows lolling in an aquarium. And curtains, Episalla's favorite subject, billow with calculated but irresistible glamour. Through Oct. 9. (Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080.)

TILL FREIWALD—Breathtaking portraits, in watercolor, by a young German painter who has muscled in on Chuck Close territory. Freiwald's format is even more unvarying than Close's: each of these large, brightly lit, deadpan mug shots features a studentish face, simplified almost to the point of anonymity. Their luminously granular skin tones, interrupted only by the sudden darks of eyes and mouth and hairline, produce a little Kate Moss-ian shock every time: how can something so bland be so mesmerizing? Through Oct. 9. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701.)

PAT LIPSKY / DAVID McDONALD—New, handsomely geometric abstract paintings, in a style that descends from Mondrian and Klee: vertical stripes of color slide past each other, changing scale and hue, as if on a mechanized loom. It's a classic modernist idiom, handled with more zest than one has any right to expect. /Small cylindrical sculptures by an English artist with a fondness for coy, Zen-like effects. One piece consists of plaster disks, affixed to the gallery walls like prehistoric dimmer switches. The installation has a low-key charm, but one wishes for less tact and more electricity. Both shows through Oct. 9. (Harris, 529 W. 20th St. 463-9666.)

DAVID SHAPIRO—Life masks of couples, cast in tofu, displayed in vats of water, in a refrigeration unit, and a video game (produced by John Groh, of Jed Brain Pictures), based on a bad LSD trip he endured as a teen-ager, which ended with him naked on the L.I.R.R. Through Oct. 16. (Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225.)



TRULY TASTELESS MEDIUM: *Forget elephant dung. By far the most remarkable art material of the young season is tofu, which Manhattan native David Shapiro has crafted into life masks, for his show at Liebman Magnan (through Oct. 16). "Tofu's just steamed soy milk and calcium sulfate, which is edible plaster of Paris, pressed hydraulically," says Shapiro, who was able to turn inspiration (his eureka moment came while eating Malaysian food) into reality, partly because he then lived down the street from a tofu factory. The heads last about two weeks, he explains, if you change the water every day. "They're classical, in a way, like marble. Except they rot. Like people."*

BEN KATCHOR

Short List—**CHARLES ATLAS,** XL, 504 W. 22nd St. 462-4111. Through Oct. 9. . . . **JAN BARACZ,** Nikolai, 505 W. 22nd St. 414-8511. Through Oct. 15. . . . **FERNANDO CANOVAS,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Nov. 9. . . . **WILLIAM L. HAWKINS,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Oct. 9. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through Nov. 16. . . . **LAURIE LONG,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through Oct. 16. . . . **MELISSA MARKS,** Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 243-3335. Through Oct. 23. . . . **HOLLY MILLER,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through Oct. 16. . . . **DAN PETERMAN,** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000. Through Oct. 16. . . . **ELLIOTT PUCKETTE,** Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 563-4474. Through Nov. 6. . . . **ANDREAS SLOMINSKI,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Oct. 16. . . . **JOSEPH STASHKEVETCH,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Through Oct. 16.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Francesco Clemente—Six large spare frescoes, mostly painted in the early eighties, when the Neapolitan artist had just moved to Manhattan. Whether it was the demands of newfound celebrity or of the rapidly drying plaster, these dreamlike images look hastily done. The best of them, a contorted self-portrait (in red) and a ring of ecstatic naked dancers (in blue), evoke the extremes of self-doubt and orgiastic excitement which Clemente must have felt during those heady years. Through Nov. 6. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

Leandro Erlich—"El Living," an installation by a young artist from Argentina who mixes magic realism and perceptual trickery in a stage set worthy of Hitchcock. A nondescript hallway (whose five closed doors suggest units in a converted office building) leads to a living room straight out of a Myrtle Beach time-share. Two windows there reveal a mirror in one case and in the other an identical room. Erlich's deceptively mundane doubled tableau provokes questions about place whose answers remain disturbingly beyond reach. Through Oct. 16. (Kent, 67 Prince St. 966-4500.)

Olivier Mosset—Dull paintings created according to an "aesthetic of indifference": two huge white monochromes (one made of five vertical panels, the other of two horizontal ones), a couple of smaller L-shaped canvases whose edges are bare, and a black square threaded with tiny lights. Mosset's works eschew the qualities of traditional painting so intensely that they are often mistaken for a wall. Press material cites John Cage's take on Rauschenberg's white paintings as an apparent inspiration: "No subject, No image, No taste, No beauty, No message, No talent, No technique, No idea, No intention, No art, No feeling." No reason, in short, to attend this exhibition. Through Oct. 23. (Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455.)

Pepón Osorio—"Once upon a time, not far away or long ago," reads the legend on the door to Osorio's installation, "there lived twin sisters who were identical in every way except in skin color." First installed in a South Bronx storefront, "Las Twines" (Spanglish for "twin girls") features sculptures of an interracial pair of *quinceañeras*, loads of heart-shaped balloons and cellophane-wrapped gifts, and a mini muscle car, painted in the image of the Puerto Rican flag. This jumble of elements, and the three video screens of men in white- or blackface, clearly intend to say something about racism. But where to go from there? Osorio provides plenty of signs but no direction. Through Oct. 9. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232.)

Yutaka Sone—Three marble miniatures set inside a potted-plant jungle and a fourth made of various natural materials like seaweed and tree branches. Sone's stone sculptures invoke the history of Western statuary with less traditional subjects, such as a roller coaster, with a car teetering at its highest point. The exhibition's best work presents a chiselled view of the island of Hong Kong, its trunklike base lifting into a tiny scale version of the city's raucous skyline. A question: Is this pillar-of-salt Hong Kong under British or Chinese rule? Through Oct. 9. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

Eve Sussman—In her début show two years ago, Sussman placed video cameras and some birdseed on a ledge outside a gallery window. When pigeons swooped down onto the ledge, they would appear, amplified and magnified, on the gallery's dark walls: the effect (an explosion of giant fluttering and cooing) was startling. Lately, however, Sussman has decided to become a more conventional kind of avant-garde filmmaker. Projected onto three twelve-by-nine-foot screens, "China/White" shows a disaffected couple lounging around their industrial loft. They smoke. They bicker. Last time, Sussman made something ordinary seem astonishing; not here. Through Oct. 9. (Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083.)

Denyse Thomasos—Abstract paintings composed of hundreds of small grids, like tic-tac-toe boards painted in color. By tilting these grids perspectivally, Thomasos assembles them into vast quasi-architectural panoramas, as intricate as the view from a midtown office tower. It's rare—and inspiring—to see a young artist working in such an unapologetically formalist idiom. Through Oct. 23. (Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

Wei Dong—In a fantastical, sexy update of an age-old practice, Wei paints raucous visions of loose-fleshed young women using a method of brush-and-ink landscapes handed down from the Ming and Qing dynasties, in compositions that borrow equally from Manet, Maoist propaganda, and Asian erotic art. His confident, physically powerful maidens spill out of their Red Army uniforms and rifle straps like Rubensian goddesses. Through Oct. 8. (Tilton, 49 Greene St. 941-1775.)

Short List—**ILAN AVERBUCH,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. 966-6676. Through Oct. 30. . . . **JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through Nov. 13. . . . **COLIN CHASE,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through Nov. 2. . . . **SHIRAZEH HOUSHIARY,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Oct. 23. . . . **ALFRED JENSEN,** Malca, 580 Broadway. 966-8854. Through Jan. 8. . . . **MARGARET KILGALLEN** and **LANE TWITCHELL,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through Oct. 9. . . . **TOM NAKASHIMA,** Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. 431-4224. Through Oct. 9. . . . **ALISON SAAR,** Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200. Through Oct. 30. . . . **MATEJ ANDRAZ VOGRINCIC,** Gibson, 568 Broadway. 925-1192. Through Oct. 30.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—Oct. 6: Photography. . . . ¶ Oct. 7: An auction of property from the estate of Allen Ginsberg, as well as other items of interest to fans of the Beat Generation. . . . ¶ Oct. 8: Oriental rugs and carpets. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—Oct. 4-5: A two-day photography auction. . . . ¶ Oct. 7: Oriental and European carpets. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** Oct. 5: Nineteenth-century paintings. . . . ¶ Oct. 8: Photography. . . . ¶ Oct. 13: Books. . . . ¶ Oct. 14: Nineteenth-century decorative art. . . . ¶ Oct. 20: Jewelry. . . . ¶ Oct. 26: European decorative art. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Swann—Photography. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Oct. 7.)

Gramercy Park Modern—A new show focussing on twentieth-century design. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. Oct. 8-10. For information, call 255-0002.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Elinor Carucci—Closeups of pores, follicles, and folds that read like topographical maps of the human body. "Stress Marks" is an oversized cross-section of the palm of a hand indented with fingernail marks, and the hair in "Lips and Hair" refers to a

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woman's faint facial fuzz. Carucci, who was born in Israel but now resides in New York, is aggressively intimate with her subjects, coming in very close and using harsh lighting, so that standard images of erotica (a pair of red-lipsticked lips, a bare breast) are stripped of sex and recast as visceral abstract forms. Through Oct. 9. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

MITCH EPSTEIN—Large-scale photographs, all taken on the streets of New York City. They're saturated with playful, Almodóvarian colors that bring out the air-brushed perfection of Manhattan moments: a model type giving a light to a guy in dire need of a shave, a family standing amid a blur of yellow cabs in Times Square. Epstein gets underneath the gloss of his subject matter and hints at its surrealist undercurrents. A cluster of cops appear overly burnished and almost demonically euphoric in spotless blue suits, and a tender moment between a man and a puppy is laced with stiffness, which may or may not have to do with his starched Polo shirt. Through Oct. 16. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.)

RICHARD MISRACH—A blindingly beautiful suite of twenty-six medium- and large-scale color prints entitled "View from My Front Porch." Well, the artist's porch (at his home in the Berkeley hills) looks out over San Francisco Bay, and the photographs, each of the exact same view taken at different times of day, are filled with sublime banks of charcoal, cotton, or ochre clouds; tangerine, lemon, and rose sunsets; heavy black storm curtains and thick rays of white light. Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge sit under the sky in the middle of each picture, and it all could have felt like just another academic exercise, but it doesn't. Misrach here seems as if he's collaborating with nature on a hot and cool, thunderous and wispy jazz improvisation. Through Oct. 23. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600.)

GROUP SHOW—New work by Lawrence Beck (black-and-white photographs of tulips), Elger Esser (color landscapes), and Hiroshi Sugimoto (movie-house interiors). Through Oct. 30. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Bill Brandt: A Retrospective." Through Oct. 31. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**DAVID ARMSTRONG,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Nov. 6. . . . **ALVIN BOOTH** and **FERENC BERKO,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Both shows through Oct. 9. . . . **ADAM FUSS,** Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through Oct. 16. . . . **SAMUEL GOTTSCHO,** Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays; through Oct. 23. . . . **MIMMO JODICE,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Nov. 6. . . . **DAVID MALIN,** Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Nov. 6. . . . **SALLY MANN,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Nov. 6. . . . **CONSTANTINE MANOS,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; Through Oct. 23. . . . **DAIDO MORIYAMA** and **REAGAN LOUIE,** Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Both shows through Oct. 30. . . . **MARK MORRISROE,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366. Through Oct. 31. . . . **JOHN PFAHL,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Oct. 23. . . . **ALISON ROSSITER,** Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Through Oct. 16. . . . **DAVID SEIDNER,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Oct. 9. . . . **JACK SPENCER,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Oct. 23. . . . **ANDRÉ STEINER,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Oct. 23. . . . **DAN WINTERS,** SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through Oct. 22.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Japan Society.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**OTELLO,** with Barbara Frittoli, Plácido Domingo, and James Morris; conducted by James Levine. (Oct. 6 at 8, Oct. 9 at 1:30, and Oct. 12 at 7:30.) . . . **MOSES UND ARON,** by Schoenberg, with Philip Langridge and John Tomlinson; Mr. Levine. (Oct. 7 at 8.) . . . **AIDA,** with Deborah Voigt, Olga Borodina, Fabio Armiliato, and Nikolai Putilin; Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 8 and Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR,** in performances that hew to Donizetti's original keys (raising the over-all tessitura of the title role as it is typically performed) and musical text (eliminating those of Lucia's stratospheric high notes that are latter-day, ahistorical interpolations); with Andrea Rost, Frank Lopardo, Roberto Frontali, and Paul Plishka; Charles Mackerras. (Oct. 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Oct. 6 at 7:30 and Oct. 9 at 8: "Madama Butterfly.". . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: Handel's "Ariodante." . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 1:30: "The Magic Flute," performed in English. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 1:30: "Carmen." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

"SONGS AND STORIES FROM MOBY DICK"—A Melville-derived performance-art piece created and performed by Laurie Anderson. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 6-9 and Oct. 12 at 7:30. Through Oct. 16.)

"THE CARBON COPY BUILDING"—A so-called "comic book opera," with words and drawings by cartoonist Ben Katchor and music by Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 6-8 at 8 and Oct. 9 at 3 and 8.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Presenting "La Traviata." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Oct. 8-9 at 7:30 and Oct. 10 at 2:30.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Mozart and his librettist and producer Emanuel Shikaneder would probably have loved the idea of presenting their Masonic opera, "Die Zauberflöte," in a venue with the mystical overtones of the Metropolitan Museum's Temple of Dendur. Eve Queler conducts this semi-staged concert performance. The cast includes soprano Ying Huang as Pamino and tenor Richard Clement as Tamino, with broadcaster Nimet Habachy providing a narration to obviate the singspiel dialogue. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 10 at 7.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducts the premières of two symphonic oratorios commissioned by Disney, both of which take as their point of departure events from the past five decades of American history: "Garden of Light," by Aaron Jay Kernis (with a libretto by David Simpatico), and "Four Seasons," by Michael Torke (with a libretto by Philip Littell). Soprano Margaret Lloyd, mezzo-soprano Mary Phillips, tenor Anthony Dean Griffey, baritones Dean Ely and Jubilant Sykes, the New York Choral Artists, and the American Boychoir all join the orchestra, which is expanded beyond its usual dimensions. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 8-9 and Oct. 12 at 8.)

MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Constantine Orbelian conducts a pair of concerts: Oct. 7 at 8: Russian songs and romances, with various vocal soloists. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 8: Works by Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev, with cellist Nina Kotova. (Carnegie Hall.)

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson leads a tribute to Mario Lanza, featuring tenor Richard Leech. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 8 at 8.)

BATON-WIELDING BASSOONIST—The Israeli bassoonist Mordechai Rechtman, for many years a legendary fixture of the Israel Philharmonic, conducts a wind-and-string ensemble in his own arrangement of music from "Don Giovanni," in addition to Dvořák's Serenade (Op. 44). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Oct. 10 at noon.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard leads Haydn's Symphony No. 25, Granville Bantock's "Scottish Scenes," and, with Harvey Pittel as soloist, Villa-Lobos's Fantasy for Soprano Saxophone and Glazunov's Saxophone Concerto. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Oct. 11 at 2 and 7 and Oct. 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—The festival's orchestra, conducted by Paolo Bellomia, performs a concert that includes Mordechai Sandberg's "Psalm No. 51" and Ives's "The Unanswered Question"; the interpretation of the latter respects Ives's usually ignored plea for a microtonal bending of certain intervals and employs an alternate version of the score, suggested by the composer, that has the English horn asking the question, rather than the trumpet. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Oct. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra—Kurt Masur conducts a working reading of Brahms's Symphony No. 1, with Brahms scholars Volker Berghahn and Wal-

CLASSICAL NOTES

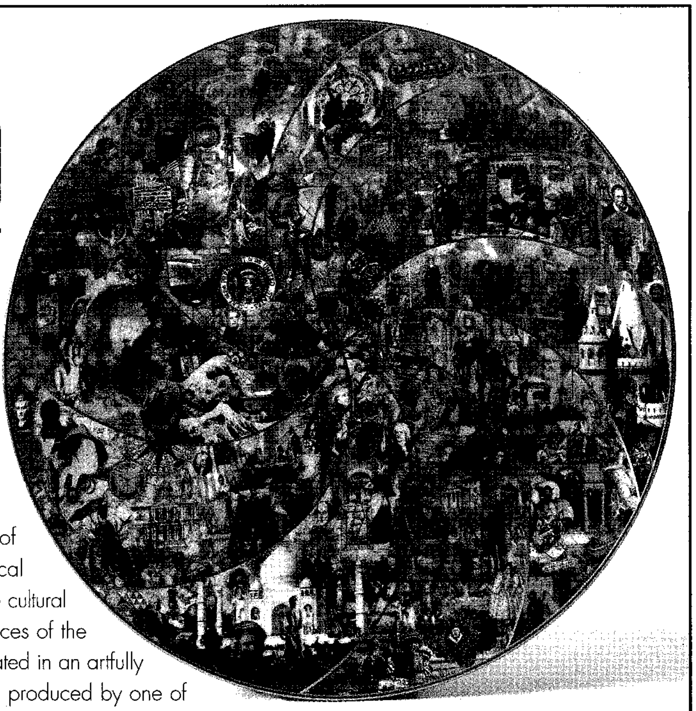
New Light on Chopin—European and American cultural capitals will resound with tributes to Fréderic Chopin on October 17, the sesquicentennial of his death. No composer is as omnipresent in the pianist's repertoire, but familiarity comes at a price; even such masterworks as the Fourth Ballade or the Second Sonata may grow less captivating after the hundredth hearing.

The indefatigably creative label Opus 111 has released a series of ten separately packaged volumes just in time for the festivities; eight of them contain a single CD, and there's a pair of two-disk sets. The collection is sure to refresh even the most jaded listeners thanks to its musical excellence, high production standards, judicious use of period instruments, and stimulating contextualization of Chopin's music. Even the disk of chestnuts—entitled "At Home"—would be interesting if only for Janusz Olejniczak's use of an 1831 Pleyel piano, precisely the sort of instrument for which the composer crafted his elusive mixture of gravitas and filigree. Olejniczak's reading of the F-Minor Concerto's slow movement is exquisite, abetted by the shimmering support of the Ensemble Mosaïques.

A reconstruction of Chopin's last Paris concert ("Paris 1848") is an inspired exercise in practical musicology. Letters and press accounts provide a general idea of what instrumental and vocal works were performed, but where confusion exists—Which Mozart piano trio? Which Chopin mazurkas?—the performers provide convincing solutions. The result is a fascinating glimpse into concert practices that have since changed enormously.

Francophones will appreciate "Intimate," an engrossing program of readings (in French) from the correspondence of Chopin and his cigar-smoking lady love, George Sand. Historically informed performers provide the musical underpinning to the readings, which are tastefully rendered by actors Andrzej Seweryn and Sonya Rykiel (better known on our shores as a fashion designer).

The series has something for every taste, including a volume of jazz renditions. But in no case should music lovers overlook "Roots," the collection's most astonishing disk. Here the Zespol Polski folk ensemble performs not only traditional mazurkas and other dances that show where Chopin was coming from but also invigorating group renditions of his piano pieces, showing that inspiration can work in both directions.



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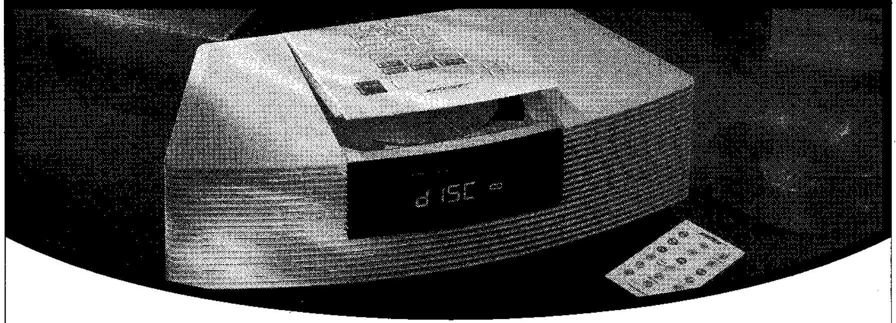

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ter Frisch on hand to discuss the work and its history. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 12 at 9:30 A.M. No tickets necessary.)

Dresdner Kreuzchor—Roderich Kreile directs the German boys' choir, which was founded more than seven hundred years ago, in a program that ranges from pieces by Schütz and Bach to twentieth-century works by Poulenc and Kodály. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 664-9360. Oct. 12 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

St. Francis Singers—The vocal quartet offers a forty-minute lunchtime concert of choral music set to texts by St. Francis of Assisi. (St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st St. Oct. 7 at 1:15. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Oct. 7 at 7:30: Presenting two masterpieces of chamber music for strings: Mozart's Divertimento in E-Flat Major for String Trio and Brahms's String Sextet No. 1. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 4: Violinist Nai-Yuan Hu, violist Paul Neubauer, and cellist Ronald Thomas team up for a program that comprises Bartók's Duos for Violin and Viola, Kodály's Duo for Violin and Cello, Tsang-Houei Hsu's Five Preludes for Solo Violin, and Dohnányi's C-Major Serenade for String Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Danish Wave—The festival continues with a variety of musical offerings. Oct. 7 at 8: A concert of chamber works by Per Nørgård (including his "Seadrift," on a text by Whitman) and Vagn Holmboe (his String Quartet No. 5, played by the Miró String Quartet, and his Trumpet Concerto, featuring Raymond Mase). (Merkin Concert Hall.) . . . ¶ Also on Oct. 7 at 8: The first of four concerts by Ars Nova, a twenty-year-old, twelve-voice chamber choir that has been especially active in the arena of contemporary music. The opening installment features music by Obrecht, Byrd, and modern Danish composers (including Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and Hans Abrahamsen), directed by the group's principal guest conductor, Paul Hiller. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520.) . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: Ars Nova offers works by Cage, William Billings, and Per Nørgård, directed by Tamás Veto. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. For information about tickets, call 787-2755.) . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 8: In its third recital, Ars Nova presents music by Obrecht, Byrd, Cage, and Pärt, directed by Mr. Hiller. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, enter at Broadway and 116th St. For information about tickets, call 854-6625.) . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 8: Ars Nova concludes its residency with a wide-ranging program. (Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Ave., at 66th St. For information about tickets, call 602-0874.)

Brentano String Quartet—Aficionados of string quartets have a tough decision to make tonight, with three worthy quartet recitals taking place in town simultaneously. In this one, the Brentanos play Schubert's G-Major Quartet (D. 887), in addition to two pieces by Steven Mackey, his "On the Verge" and "Troubadour Songs," with the composer assisting on the electric guitar. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 8 at 8.)

American String Quartet—The foursome performs Beethoven's Quartets in B-Flat Major (Op. 18, No. 6) and A Minor (Op. 132), in addition to Bartók's Quartet No. 6. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. Oct. 8 at 8.)

Vertavo String Quartet—The Norwegian ensemble plays Michael Edlund's "Brains & Dancin'," Veli-Matti Puumula's String Quartet (1999), and Per Nørgård's Quartet No. 8 ("Night Descending"). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 8 at 8.)

Flux String Quartet—Morton Feldman's String Quartet No. 2 was last scheduled to be played in New York on August 3, 1996, as part of the Lincoln Center Festival's Feldman retrospective. One can hardly blame the members of the Kronos String Quartet for backing out on that occasion, citing incompatibility with the piece: it lasts a taxing six hours, without a break. Feldman fans should be happy to see it arrive again (*really* arrive this time, one hopes), though the Flux foursome is billing it as a three-to-five-hour piece. Either they're intending to play Feldman's very slow music on the fast side, or else they're taking a few shortcuts—neither of which option is likely to elicit many objections from audiences after the hour hand starts on its third sweep. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 9 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

Maurizio Pollini—The pianist, who has had a hand in programming an imaginative series at Carnegie Hall this season, performs the first concert of the exercise, comprising the famously forward-looking pieces: Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata, Schoenberg's "Three Piano Pieces" (Op. 11), and Stockhausen's "Klavierstück X." (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 10 at 3. . . . ¶ **note:** On Oct. 6 at 7:30, in Weill Recital Hall, Mr. Pollini discusses the series.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra, plus a few colleagues, perform a program replete with curiosities: Virgil Thomson's "Four Portraits for Four Clarinets," Franz Doppler's "L'Oiseau du Bois" (for the astonishing combination of flute and four French horns), Ravel's "Sonatine en Trio" (a reworking, by Carlos Salzedo, of the composer's Sonatine for Piano), Saint-Saëns's "Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs," Charles-Martin Loeffler's Three Rhapsodies, and Copland's Sextet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 10 at 3.)

Met Chamber Ensemble—James Levine conducts members of the Met Orchestra in Lukas Foss's "Time Cycle" and several pieces by Milton Babbitt, featuring soprano Dawn Upshaw. Completing the program are Bartók's "Contrasts" and three works by Schumann (including his Piano Quintet, with Mr. Levine at the keyboard). (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 10 at 5.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

mimosa chamber ensemble: A conductorless chamber orchestra, performing works by Mozart, Handel, Barber, and Janáček. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Oct. 10 at 3. No tickets necessary.) . . . **elina vähälä:** Young Concert Artists presents this Finnish violinist, with pianist Mirka Viitala, performing sonatas by Debussy, Schubert, and Brahms (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Oct. 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 307-6655.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

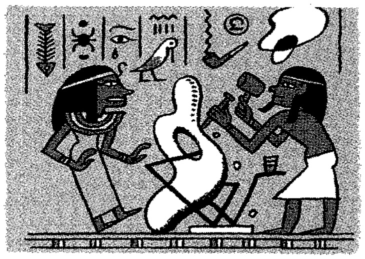
Readings—Oct. 6 at 8: By poets John Ashbery and Stanley Moss. (Stella Adler Conservatory, 419 Lafayette St. For reservations, which are required, call 260-0525.) . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 7: By Robert Stone, Claire Messud, Paul Auster, Rosario Ferre, Alastair Reid, and other writers, from the work of Jorge Luis Borges. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 334-1660.) . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 9: By poets Betsy Andrews and Julie Patton. (Bluestockings, 172 Allen St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Oct. 10 at 5: Novelist Thulani Davis moderates a discussion about playwriting with authors Nilo Cruz, Jessica Hagedorn, and Suzan-Lori Parks. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8685.) . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6: Illustrator Ben Katchor, Ridge Theatre artistic director Bob McGrath, and composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe discuss "The Carbon Copy Building," their current collaboration at the Kitchen. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.) . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 6: Steven Feiner, director of Columbia University's Computer Graphics and User Interfaces Laboratory, talks about "augmented reality," a state that is accomplished with head-worn and hand-held computer displays. (New York Academy of Sciences, 2 E. 63rd St. 838-0230.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Live and Let Die

THE recently announced discovery of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Egyptian mummies from the Roman era in a network of tombs untouched for two millennia reinforces the impression that, for sheer panache, no culture has ever surpassed the Egyptian way with death. **The Mummy in Ancient Egypt** (Thames and Hudson), by Salima Ikram and Aidan Dodson, explores every aspect of death—from ritual to tomb construction to mummification—through more than three thousand years of Egyptian history. Their study takes on an eerie quality as discussions of sumptuous ornaments, golden masks, and megalithic sarcophagi give way to close analyses of the desiccated corpses within.



Egyptians, of course, knew how to live as well as die. **Ancient Egypt** (Oxford), edited by David Silverman, provides a useful outline of Egyptian history and culture. It points out that the annual floods of the Nile tended to provide Egyptians with a fairly secure life, and the surrounding desert kept outside influences and threats to a minimum. The result was a very stable culture, with strongly established hierarchies and traditions. Those first-century-A.D. mummies, wrapped in shrouds with gilded or painted face covers, look not unlike the mummies of two thousand years earlier.

Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids (Metropolitan Museum of Art/Abrams) shows how much latitude for individual expression there was within the relatively rigid artistic traditions of the time. In this accompanying volume to a current exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, the photographs and essays linger on the naturalistic details of statues and paintings. One of the most imposing works in the Met's exhibition is of Hemiunu, a high official and the presumed architect of the Great Pyramid at Giza. A massively obese figure with an unexpressive face, the statue has been lovingly sculpted by an artist with an acute eye for realistic detail. Idealized realism was extremely important to a culture that believed that an effigy of a deceased person could actually be a "repository for the living ka, the actual life-force of gods, kings, and human beings."

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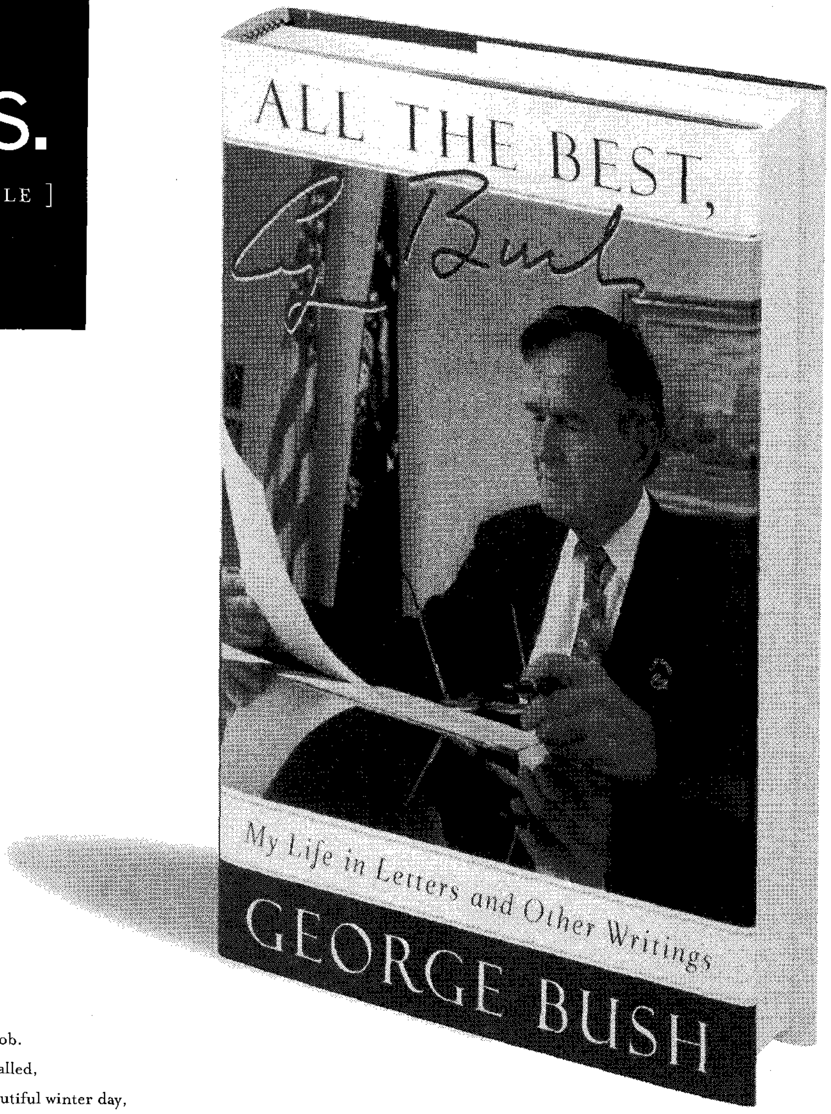

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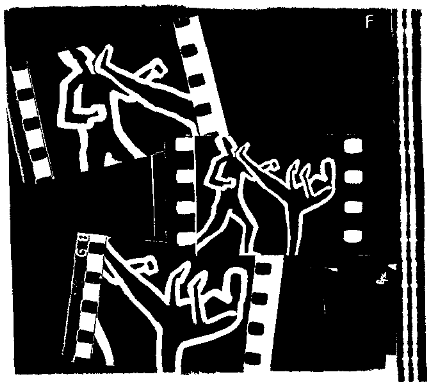


THE MOVIES

OPENING

Boys Don't Cry—The story of Brandon Teena (Hilary Swank), a twenty-year-old woman who lived as a young man in Nebraska. Directed by Kimberly Peirce. Opening Oct. 8. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.)

L'Ennui—Cedric Kahn's tale of a middle-aged philosophy professor's search for love. In French. Opening Oct. 8. (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Five Wives, Three Secretaries and Me—Tessa Blake's documentary about her father, a Texas lawyer turned oil magnate. Opening Oct. 8. (Quad Cinema.)

The Grandfather—The relationships between three generations of a Spanish family at the turn of the century. Directed by José Luis Garci. In Spanish. Opening Oct. 8. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Limey—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 8. (Angelika Film Center.)

Random Hearts—An adventure film about a Washington, D.C., couple (Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas) who meet after their spouses die in a plane crash. Directed by Sydney Pollack. Opening Oct. 8.

Superstar—Molly Shannon plays teen-ager Mary Katherine Gallagher, who goes to Hollywood in search of her first kiss. Based on the character Ms. Shannon created on "Saturday Night Live"; directed by Bruce McCulloch. Opening Oct. 8.

Whiteboys—A group of white kids from Iowa are given a chance to become Chicago gangsta rappers. With Danny Hoch; directed by Marc Levin. Opening Oct. 8. (Union Square.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Alfredo, Alfredo (1972)—Dubbed with a mellifluous Italian voice, Dustin Hoffman gives a warm and friendly performance as a shy young Italian bank clerk, and the novelty of seeing him without his own frightened, choked-up voice adds an extra dimension to this Pietro Germi comedy. Germi's method pits individuals—heaping collections of foibles—against the rigid Italian legal system, with its irrational laws governing marriage, divorce, and cohabitation. But the comic tone is a bit used; everything Germi does here he has done before, and better (especially in "Divorce—Italian Style"). In Italian.—*Pauline Kael* (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 6-7.)

American Beauty—This amazing and impassioned fantasia about American loneliness begins as satire and ends with a vision of the sublime. The defeated suburban patriarch Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey), condemned by his withdrawn daughter (Thora Birch) and his hyperorganized wife (Annette Bening), drops out of his job and misbehaves badly. After Lester's marriage gets blown apart by squalls of comic contempt, the movie, which was written by Alan Ball and directed by the British theatre maestro Sam Mendes (it's his first film), opens up and takes in Lester's suburban territory—the dissatisfactions of the business-mad nineties, in which the gospel of selfishness leaves people clenched and isolated. The bitter satirical riffs slowly give way to a mystical appreciation of the vagrant beauty trapped beneath the surface of life.—*David Denby* (9/20/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, Kips Bay Theatres, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Black Cat, White Cat—"I don't give a shit about death!" exclaims an old man as he rides in an open car along the Serbian Danube, accompanied by his grandson and a big, lively band of musicians. The man has just been liberated from a hospital, and his vulgar ebullience reflects director Emir Kusturica's own insistently sunny mood. The story centers around a small-time con man whose get-rich-quick schemes involve him with a coked-up, disco-dancing gangster and the aging local Mafia don. But this is a Rube Goldberg type of Gypsy Mafia, complete with train robberies (the entire train, not just the stuff in it), escapes from arranged marriages, and corpses kept in an attic under precariously balanced slabs of ice. The film's two and a quarter hours of unrelenting zaniness are more exhausting than uplifting. In Serbo-Croatian and Romany.—*Ken Marks* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

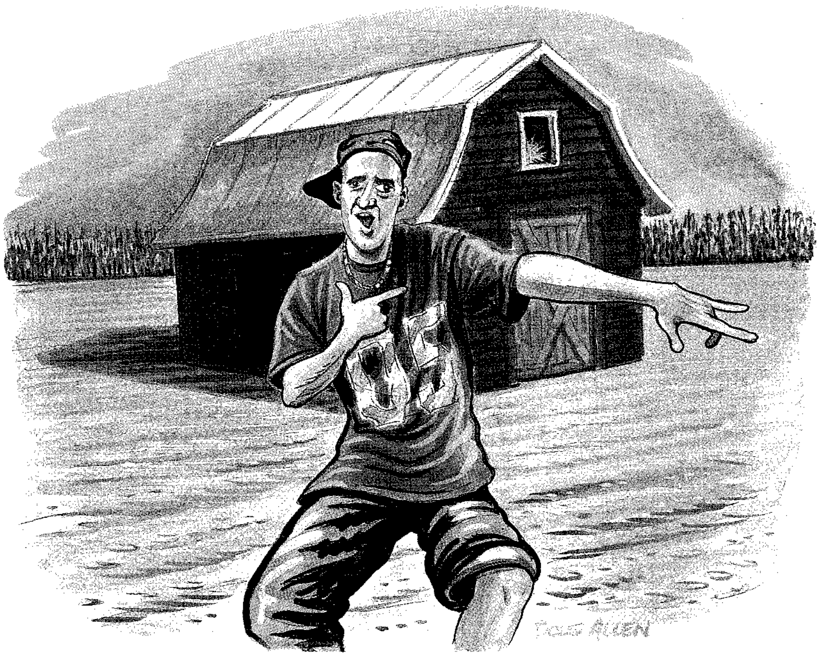
For Love of the Game—The Detroit Tigers pitcher Billy Chapel (Kevin Costner), a forty-year-old right-hander with a sore shoulder, works on a perfect game against the Yankees, and, as he pitches, innings of his relationship with a magazine writer and single mother (Kelly Preston), pass through his mind. Billy is a combination of stoic warrior and Hemingway's old man in the sea, fighting the great fish. And yet the movie is not all idealization: Billy can be cold and self-involved, and "For Love of the Game" asks whether the same qualities that make an athlete a champion don't also destroy his happiness. The answer, unfortunately, is long-winded and redundant, and the iron-larynxed baseball announcer Vin Scully, who narrates the game, turns everything into a cliché. But some of the baseball scenes are good. With John C. Reilly as Billy's tender-hearted catcher. Written by Dana Stevens, who adapted Michael Shaara's novel, and directed by Sam Raimi, who shows an unexpected flair for popular romance.—*D.D.* (9/27/99) (Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 72nd Street East, and Waverly.)

Guinevere—Romantic and shrewdly realistic at the same time. A smart San Francisco girl, Harper (Sarah Polley), escapes an unhappy family of lawyers and a career at Harvard Law School and takes up instead with Connie (Stephen Rea), a bohemian Mission District photographer who tells her that she's an artist. The photographer is a con man and a practiced seducer of young women, but he delivers the goods—not just sex but the attention that a young woman needs. Stephen Rea doesn't mask Connie's decrepitude, but he colors it with a lilting voice and a sad-eyed charm, and the young Canadian actress Sarah Polley is a proud, delicate performer—a potential star. Written and directed with warmth and perception by Audrey Wells.—*D.D.* (9/27/99) (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Happy, Texas—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

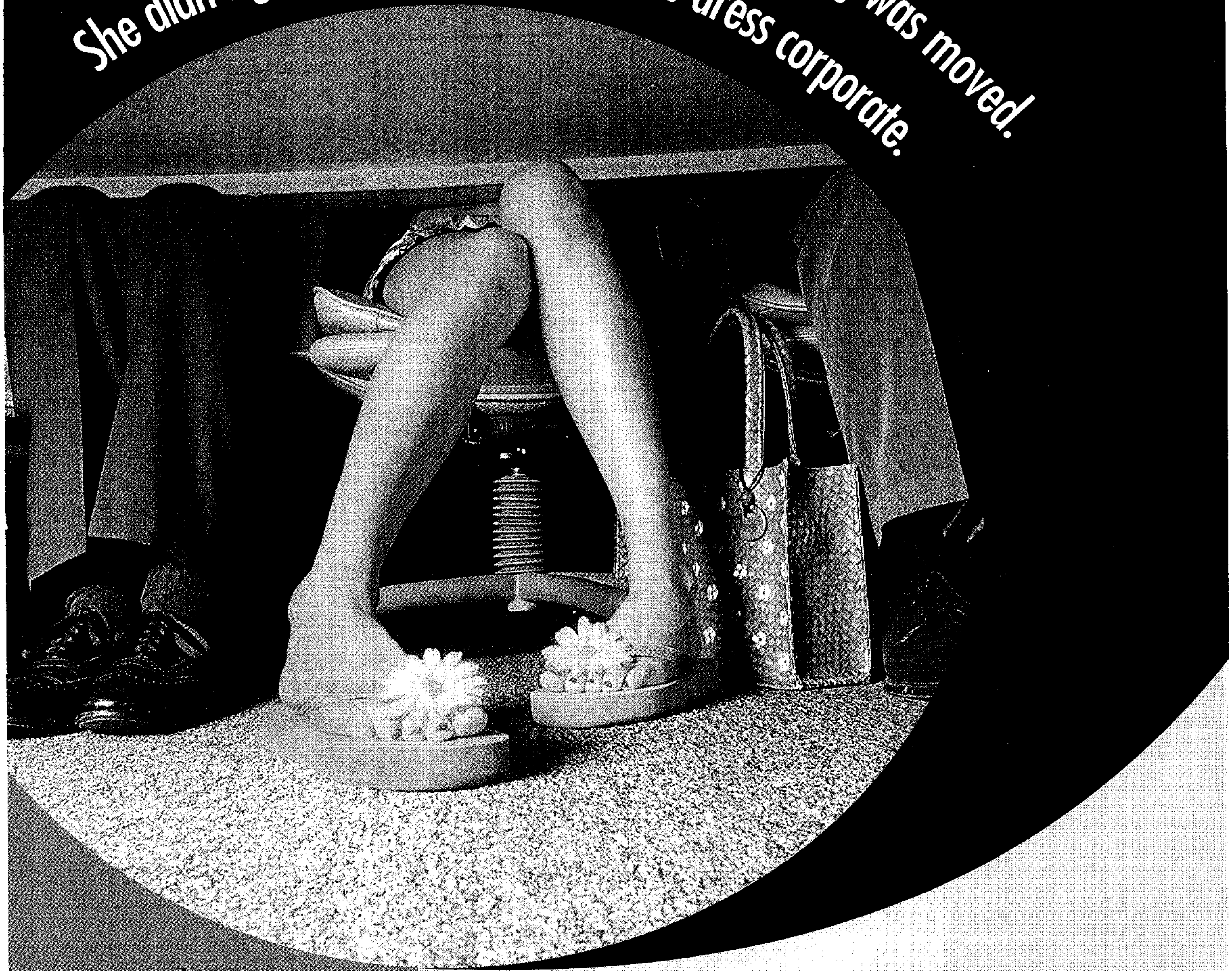
Intolerance (1916)—D. W. Griffith's epic celebration of the potentialities of the film medium—perhaps the greatest movie ever made and the greatest folly in movie history. It is charged with visionary excitement about the power of movies to combine music, dance, narrative, drama, painting, and photography—to do alone what all the other arts together had done. In this extravaganza one can see the source of most of the major traditions of the screen—the methods of Eisenstein and von Stroheim, the Germans and the Scandinavians, and, when it's bad, De Mille. It combines extraordinary lyric passages, realism, and psychological details with nonsense, vulgarity, and painful sentimentality. Four stories set in different historical periods are told by crosscutting, and they reach simultaneous climaxes. The cast includes Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Robert Harron, Bessie Love, Margery Wilson, Eugene Pallette, and Constance Talmadge. Silent.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 9 and Oct. 11.)

Law of Desire (1987)—This flamboyantly glamorous homosexual fantasy by Madrid's gagster-artist Pedro Almodóvar is satirical, romantic, metaphorical; it has wonderful jokes and the exaggerated plot of an absurdist Hollywood melodrama. It doesn't disguise its narcissism; it turns it into bright-colored tragicomedy. And even when it loses its beat (after a murder) there's always something happening. Carmen Maura, a powerful actress in the manner of the early Anna Mag-



Opening Oct. 8, Danny Hoch in Marc Levin's "Whiteboys."

She got the voicemail telling her the meeting was moved. She didn't get the fax that told her to dress corporate.



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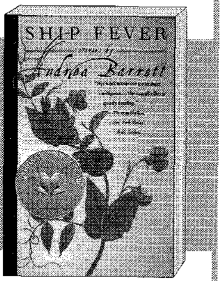

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nani, with the trippiness and self-mockery of Bette Midler, plays Tina, a transsexual who has a hot, roiling temperament. Tina's celebrity brother Pablo (Eusebio Poncela) directs classy homoerotic films. One night, Pablo takes home Antonio (Antonio Banderas), a government minister's son, who has been stalking him; by morning, Antonio loves him, is determined to possess him completely, and refuses to get out of his life. This is one of the rare movies that's sensually exciting at the same time that it's funny. In Spanish.—*P.K.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 9.)

The Matinee Idol (1928)—*The restoration of this* long-lost Frank Capra silent is a marvel of computer technology; the picture itself—about a blackface musical-comedy star (Johnnie Walker) who stumbles onto an inadvertently hilarious hick-town theatre troupe (featuring Bessie Love)—is an engaging curio. In his autobiography, Capra wrote, "I tried mixing in another so-called sure-fire ingredient with comedy—a little love story. It seemed to work." In the best scenes, it does: when Walker tries to snuggle into Love's arms while playing a dying soldier in the company's Civil War melodrama, their furtive play of hands tickles the laughs out of you. But the inventiveness peters away once Walker and his city-slicker friends book the troupe on Broadway as a comedy act, and in the finale and epilogue we get the first risings of the torrential Capra sap. The movie is still worth seeing for the funny stuff.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Oct. 11.)

Mumford—The definition of "dud." The hero (Loren Dean) is a good listener—a young psychologist in a small American town who uses unorthodox methods and applies common-sense solutions to his patients' not very interesting problems. It turns out he has a secret, but its revelation has no dramatic effect whatsoever. The mood of this tepid comedy, which was written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, is companionable but vaguely tedious—the movie resembles a droning radio show from about 1946. Kasdan solves his plot difficulties by pairing off the patients in unlikely combinations. With Martin Short, Hope Davis, Mary McDonnell, Jason Lee, and Pruitt Taylor Vince, all wasted.—*D.D.* (10/4/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street Street Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, State, and Union Square.)

Outside Providence—This comedy embraces all the clichés that "Rushmore" so niftily exploded. It's 1974, and the sweet but troubled, wrong-side-of-the-tracks Tim Dunphy (Shawn Hatosy) gets busted and sent to prep school, where he romances the upper-crusty but tolerant coed Jane Weston (Amy Smart), battles the evil dorm master, befriends a picked-on nerd, and learns a lot about life, love, and responsibility. There's also the obligatory face-off with his gruff, disappointed dad—Alec Baldwin, who uses an accent that careens between Rhode Island and Ralph Kramden. Written by Peter and Bobby Farrelly and Michael Corrente, who also directed.—*K.M.* (Sutton and Village East Cinemas.)

Romance—The great advantage of growing up French is that you can be absurd without ever knowing it. In Catherine Breillat's sexually explicit drama, Marie (Caroline Ducey), a dark teardrop of a girl who is spurned by her live-in boyfriend, drags herself without apparent pleasure through one sordid sex situation after another while intoning such thoughts to herself as "I like it to be anonymous. It's my purity—more metaphysical." Only in a French movie would a woman embrace sexual experimentation merely to attain an enormous *pensée.* Marie finds happiness with her boss, a proudly ugly, middle-aged schoolmaster, who ties her up. "Why do men who disgust us appeal to us more than men who respect us?" she asks. Abrupt but static, pornographic but unarousing, and emotionally muffled throughout, the movie feels like a third-rate Left Bank novel from fifty years ago. In

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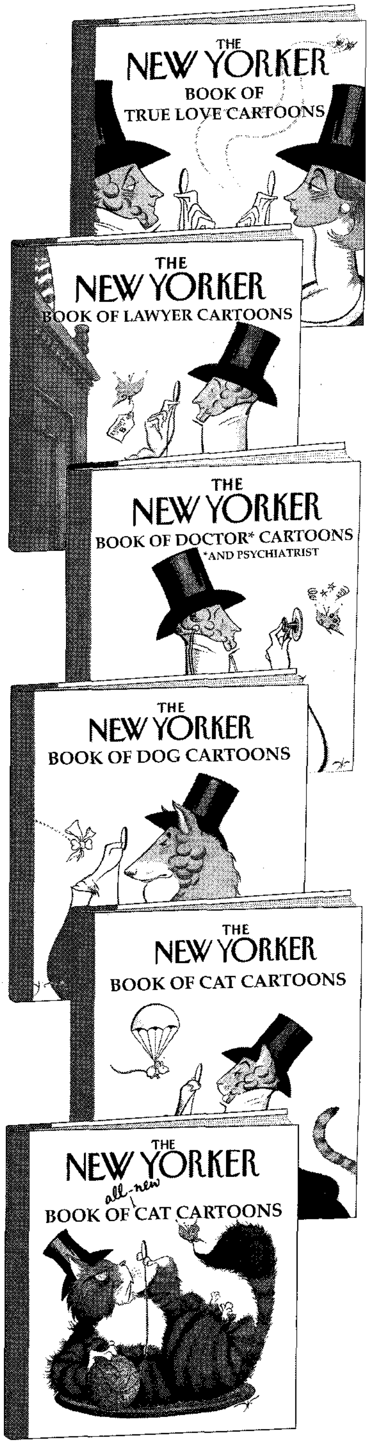
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French.—*D.D.* (9/27/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Quad Cinema.)

Stir of Echoes—Kevin Bacon is Tom, a working-class Chicago guy who has never wanted to be famous, just not so ordinary. As it turns out, his son can communicate with the dead. Welcome to extra-ordinary, pal. Soon, Tom implausibly gains the sight his son possesses, and the ensuing ghost story and murder mystery unfold without much dread or suspense.—*K.M.* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, State, and Union Square.)

Sugar Town—An L.A. satire that's not nearly sharp enough or mean enough for its own good. Allison Anders and Kurt Voss, who co-wrote and co-directed, introduce us to a group of friends and acquaintances on the fringes of the movie and music businesses. Everybody's dissatisfied. The rock guys, who were big in the eighties, are now having trouble getting arrested. The actress (Rosanna Arquette), a former horror-film ingénue, balks at having to play her age. The production designer (Ally Sheedy) will try every New Age technique in the Yellow Pages to cure her loneliness. And, of course, the clerk in the health-food store keeps his head shots on hand just in case his ticket to stardom stops in for wheat berries. It's all pretty familiar material by now (Robert Altman's nailed this milieu at least twice), and it's not helped by the marshmallowy consistency of nearly every scene.—*K.M.* (First & 62nd Cinemas and Union Square.)

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Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
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Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
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East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
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Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
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Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
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Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
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State, Broadway at 45th St.
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Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
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Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
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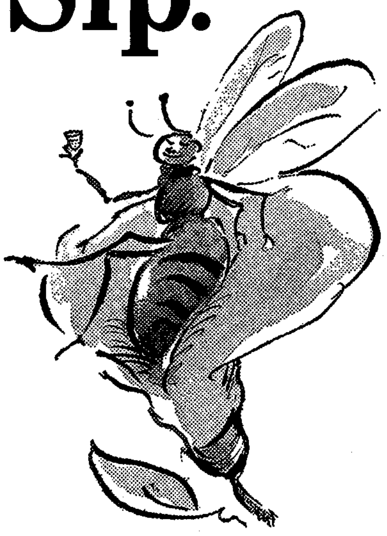
Three Kings—Or, "Four Men in a Humvee." At its best, David O. Russell's murderously unstable movie about the end of the Gulf War offers wild, bitter farce and fitful insights into the oddity of the conflict. At its worst, it's an irresponsible, infuriating mess. Are we supposed to get excited when American soldiers charge into a bunker in search of the gold that Saddam's troops looted from Kuwait? Russell can't stop himself from celebrating American know-how and prowess even as he's mocking the soldiers as amoral thieves. Then he changes direction again and turns them into noble fellows who empathize with the anti-Saddam irregulars left inside Iraq at the end of the war. The movie's style ranges from extravagant experimentation (at moments of conflict, Russell whips the camera around like a bola) to cruddy action theatrics. With George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, Ice Cube, and Spike Jonze.—*D.D.* (10/4/99) (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Violent Saturday (1955)—It's a three-headed hybrid: "The Asphalt Jungle" meets "Kings Row," with a touch of "Friendly Persuasion." Stephen McNally, Lee Marvin, and J. Carroll Naish are thieves scheming to rob the bank in the small mining town of Bradenville; Richard Egan is a copper heir with a nymphomaniac wife; Victor Mature is the copper mine's good-guy production manager; and Ernest Borgnine is the Amish farmer outside town who, along with Mature, gets swept into the thieves' escape plan. The movie lacks a core and a camera style, and its treatment of the Amish is thin and rickety. But it's packed with twists and surprises. Marvin proves most unsettling as a hard guy who's always snorting from an inhaler (it's psychosomatic: he once had a wife with a perpetual cold). Mature, with his stricken manliness, reminds you of why James Agee thought he would be perfect as Diomed in "Troilus and Cressida." Richard Fleischer directed; Sidney Boehm adapted the novel by William Heath.—*M.S.* (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 7.)

The Wages of Fear (1953)—An existential thriller—the most original and shocking French melodrama of the fifties. The opening sequence shows us a verminous South American village and the Europeans trapped in it; they will risk everything for the money to get out. An oil well three hundred miles away has caught fire, and the oil company offers four of them two thousand dollars each to drive two trucks loaded with nitroglycerine (to explode out the fire) over primitive roads. The four are a Corsican (Yves Montand), a Frenchman (Charles Vanel), an Italian (Folco Lulli), and a German (Peter Van Eyck), and the film is about their responses to the gruelling test of driving the trucks. When you can be blown up at any moment only a fool believes that character determines fate. In this situation, courage and caution are almost irrelevant, and ordinary human responses are futile and archaic—yet nothing else is left. If this isn't a parable of man's position in the modern world, it's at least an illustration of it. Henri-Georges Clouzot directed his own adaptation of George Arnaud's novel. In French.—*P.K.* (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 9.)

West Beirut—The best début movies have a quality all their own—a kind of breathless, jolting ebullience, suggesting that young filmmakers would burst if they didn't get to tell their stories. The Lebanese director Ziad Doueiri is one such enthusiast; his movie has its rough patches and, toward the end, its slightly damp longueurs, but it nails a time and a place so firmly that, when it ends, you feel bereft. Based largely on Doueiri's own teen-age years, it stars his brother Rami as Tarek, a Beirut schoolboy with a sly smile. Tarek lives with his parents, Hala (Carmen Lebbos) and Riad (Joseph Bou Nassar), in the Muslim area of East Beirut; the tale begins in April, 1975, when sectarian rivalries split the city in two. Suddenly, Tarek

Sip.



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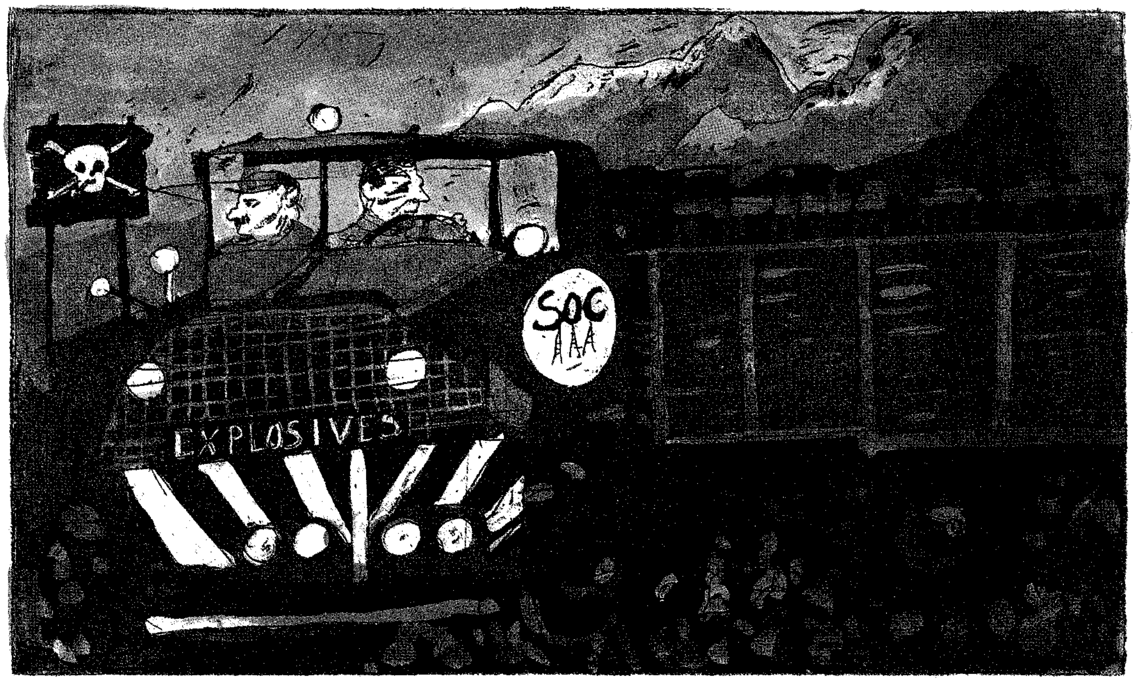
and his friend Omar (Mohamad Chamas) are unable to attend school in the Eastern sector; the simple act of getting film developed involves a mortal risk. There are extraordinary scenes here, as moments of light comedy flip casually into the treacherous, and vice versa; if you want solid political history, the film is no more than an infuriating sketch, but as an exercise in the unpredictable it shows both nerve and charm. In Arabic.—*Anthony Lane* (9/6/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)



At Anthology Film Archives, Henri-Georges Clouzot's "The Wages of Fear."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

ALSO PLAYING

THE ADVENTURES OF ELMO IN GROUCHLAND: East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **BLUE STREAK:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB:** Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **DOUBLE JEOPARDY:** Astor Plaza, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **DRIVE ME CRAZY:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **EARTH:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **LA GRANDE ILLUSION** (1937): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **JAKOB THE LIAR:** Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street Cinema, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Union Square, and Ziegfeld. . . . **LOVE REINVENTED:** Quad Cinema. . . . **LUCIE AUBRAC:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **MYSTERY, ALASKA:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **NEW ROSE HOTEL:** Cinema Village. . . . **PLUNKETT & MACLEANE:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Kips Bay Theatre. . . . **RUNAWAY BRIDE** (8/9/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RUN LOLA RUN:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE SIXTH SENSE** (8/23-30/99): Cinema II, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **STIGMATA:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, Union Square, and Waverly.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL—The annual festival of international films. **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Oct. 6 at 6 and Oct. 7 at 9: "Set Me Free" (Léa Pool; Canada and Switzerland). . . . Oct. 6 at 8:30: "Pola X" (Leos Carax; France). . . . Oct. 7 at 6 and Oct. 9 at 9:15: "The Other" (Youssef Chahine; Egypt and France). . . . Oct. 8 at 6 and Oct. 9 at 3: "The Woman Chaser" (Robinson Devor; United States). . . . Oct. 8 at 9 and Oct. 9 at noon: "Holy Smoke" (Jane Campion; Australia). . . . Oct. 9 at 6: "Mobutu, King of Zaire" (Thierry Michel; Belgium). . . . **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Oct. 10 at 7:30: Felicia's Journey" (Atom Egoyan; Canada). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Closed for renovations until Oct. 13.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The first in a seventeen-month-long series of films from the museum's collection, this program consists of silent films, 1893-1928. Oct. 7 at 2:30 and Oct. 8 at 6: "The Nut" (1921, Theodore Reed). . . . Oct. 7 at 6 and Oct. 8 at 2:30: "A Woman of Paris" (1923, Charles Chaplin). . . . Oct. 8 at 8 and Oct. 12 at 2:30: "The Iron Horse" (1924, John Ford). . . . Oct. 9 at 2 and Oct. 11 at 5: "The Floorwalker" (1916, Chaplin) and "Easy Street" (1917, Chaplin). . . . Oct. 9 at 5 and Oct. 11 at 2: "Intolerance" (†). . . . Oct. 10 at 2 and Oct. 12 at 6: "The Female of the Species" (1916, Raymond B. West). . . . Oct. 10 at 5: "Blood and Sand" (1922, Fred Niblo). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8, Oct. 9-10 at 2, 3:30, and 5:30, and Oct. 11 at 2 and 5: Nine different programs of films and videos by Brazilian director Arthur Omar.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Pietro Germi; in Italian, with English subtitles. Oct. 6 at 4 and Oct. 7 at 6:45: "Alfredo, Alfredo" (†). . . . Oct. 6 at 8:30 and Oct. 7 at 4: "My Friends" (1975). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6:15 and Oct. 7 at 9: "A Visitor from the Living" (1997, Claude Lanzmann; in French). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 6 and 9:30: "The Man Who Laughs" (1928, Paul Leni; silent), with a new score composed by Gabriel Thibaudeau and performed by Octuor de France. . . . ¶ Oct. 9-10 at 2, 6, and 9: Four different programs of avant-garde films.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Oct. 6: "Moby Dick" (1956, John Huston). . . . Oct. 7: "Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt" (1996, Michal Goldman; in English and Arabic). . . . Oct. 8: "Brief Encounter" (1945, David Lean). . . . Oct. 9: "In Which We Serve" (Noël Coward and Lean). . . . Oct. 10: "Astonished Heart" (1950, Anthony Darnborough and Terrence Fisher). . . . Oct. 11: "The Matinee Idol" (†) and "Rain or Shine" (1930, Frank Capra). . . . Oct. 12: "Life Is a Dream" (1986, Raul Ruiz).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish, with English subtitles. Oct. 9 at 2: "Law of Desire" (†). . . . Oct. 9 at 4: "Kika" (1993). . . . Oct. 10 at 2: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982). . . . Oct. 10 at 4: "Live Flesh" (1997).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Oct. 10 at 7, the feature will be "Cat People" (1982, Paul Schrader), with Nastassia Kinski and Malcolm McDowell.

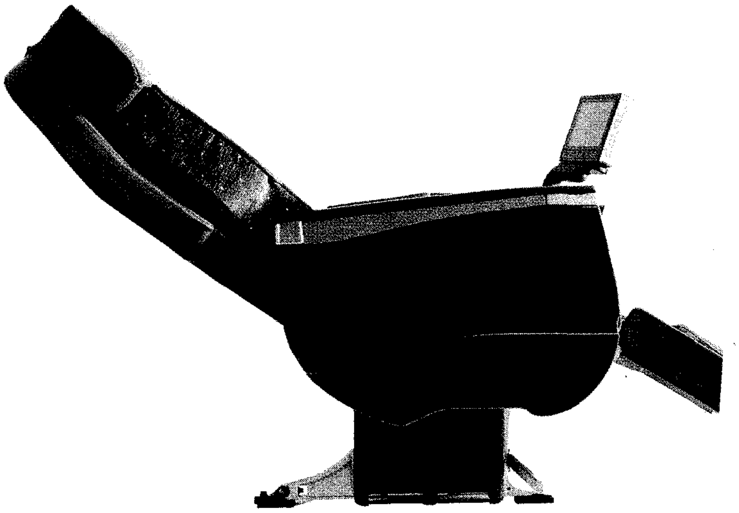
MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A program of television shows featuring Noël Coward works. Through Oct. 7: "Producers' Showcase: Tonight at 8:30," three Coward plays, directed by Otto Preminger, with Ginger Rogers. . . . From Oct. 8: "Ford Star Jubilee: This Happy Breed" (1956), with Coward. (Tuesdays through Sundays at 2:30.). . . ¶ Through Oct. 10: Parts III and IV of Dennis Potter's "Pennies from Heaven" (1978), with Bob Hoskins. . . . From Oct. 12: Parts V and VI of "Pennies from Heaven." (Tuesdays through Sundays at 1:30.)

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Oct. 7 at 7: "Dr. Faustus" (1968, Richard Burton and Neville Coghill). . . . Oct. 7 at 9: "Violent Saturday" (†). . . . Oct. 9 at 4: "The Wages of Fear" (†). . . . Oct. 10 at 4:30: "Diabolique" (1954, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French).

MILLER THEATRE, Broadway at 116th St. (854-7799)—A series of films directed by Elia Kazan. Oct. 11 at 6: "The Last Tycoon" (1976), with Robert De Niro. . . . Oct. 11 at 8:30: "Viva Zapata!" (1952), with Marlon Brando.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Oct. 12 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Promise" (1997, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne; in French).

Alone at last.



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Women's Health Initiatives

At the PRIME *of* THEIR LIVES

Legacy of Neglect

Only a decade ago, the idealized woman patient was a one-hundred-and-thirty pound white male. At least that's how doctors were taught to see her. For all practical purposes, instruction in human physiology was based on the male body, except when students were studying reproductive systems or pregnancy. ▲ Those days are gone forever. Women's health has become one of the hottest topics of the era. No longer medicine's wallflowers, women are fervently courted by health plans, medical centers, and pharmaceutical companies. This sea change is the product of several social, political, and economic tides. Women who made strides in politics and the workplace began pushing for progress in health care. Baby boomers reaching menopause created a demand for postreproductive medicine. The health care industry recognized the market potential of the growing population of females over fifty. ▲ But these forces didn't coalesce overnight. Says activist and former lobbyist for the American Psychiatric Association, Phyllis Greenberger: "Ten years ago, I'd go to medical meetings around the country and repeatedly hear the same question: Where are the data on women?" Frustrated, she joined with a cadre of like-minded women to form the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research.

Illustration by Gayle Kabaker

"A life transition to be managed, not ignored."

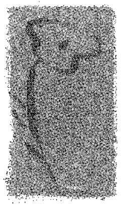
Advocates for Change

Working with the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, the society prompted an investigation, which verified that women had been seriously shortchanged in health research. The report led to the establishment of the Office of Research on Women's Health within the National Institutes of Health. NIH mounted the Women's Health Initiative, a fifteen-year study of 161,000 postmenopausal women. The Food and Drug Administration took action, overthrowing a 1977 guideline that had excluded women with childbearing potential from drug studies, and calling for gender-specific analysis of research results. The government launched what was tantamount to a New Deal in women's health, and NIH funded a series of studies aimed at reducing health risks in older women.

Menopause Management

Now one of the most widely discussed and well-studied stages of the normal life cycle, menopause has become a life transition to be managed instead of ignored. This entails not only alleviating the common symptoms of menopause, but also reducing the risks of heart disease, osteoporosis, breast cancer, and other conditions that become more prevalent in women after midlife.

Most women want to know which of the increasing array of options for menopause management is best for them. While there's no easy answer, estrogen, the old standby, offers the



closest thing to "one-stop shopping" but at a price—an increased risk of endometrial and breast cancers. Add a natural or synthetic progestogen, and the heightened uterine cancer risk is gone, but the trade-off can be PMS-like side effects. Natural phytoestrogens in soy and herbals can offer some relief and risk reduction, but there are few data on their long-term benefits.

Evista (raloxifene), one of the newest approaches to menopause management, is a selective estrogen receptor modulator (SERM). Like other SERMs under development, Evista acts as an estrogen-mimic in some tissues and an estrogen-blocker in others. It prevents bone loss and reduces serum cholesterol levels. Moreover, it does not appear to increase the risk of uterine cancer, and may even lower the risk of breast cancer. Endocrinologist JoAnn Manson, an investigator for both the Nurses' Health Study and the Women's Health Initiative, calls the development of SERMs "a very exciting area of research because these designer estrogens may prove to deliver the benefits of estrogen without the risks."

Heart Smarts

"Heart disease is one of the best examples of gender differences in health," says cardiologist Marianne Legato, director of the Partnership for Women's Health at Columbia University. Legato, who is the founder and editor of *The Journal of Gender-Specific Medicine*, notes that studies have shown significant differences between women and men in risk factors, symptoms, screening results, clinical manifestations, response to treatment, and intervention outcomes.

> *"When women do have heart attacks, they are more likely to be fatal."*

Such studies have indicated that women develop heart disease ten years later than their male counterparts—a grace period conferred by the protective effects of natural estrogen production. However, when women do have heart attacks, they are more likely to be fatal. Those who survive are more inclined than men to suffer a second heart attack or to have a subsequent stroke.

Although logic suggests that estrogen supplementation should confer cardiac protection for postmenopausal women, clinical trials have produced mixed messages. The Postmenopausal Estrogen/Progestin Intervention (PEPI) trial indicated that estrogen reduced many risk factors for heart disease, yet the Heart Attack and Estrogen Replacement Study (HERS) failed to demonstrate that estrogen prevented heart attacks in women with existing heart disease. The Women's Health Initiative and other studies in progress are expected to better define estrogen's role.

Surviving Breast Cancer

Although a woman's lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is now one in eight, her chances of succumbing to the disease are declining steadily. The shift is due primarily to advances in early diagnosis and prevention, although treatment also has improved. Thanks to mammography, as many as twenty-five per cent of tumors are now detected while they are still contained within the mammary ducts or lobes, when the five-year survival rate is better than ninety-five per cent. The identification of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes has made it possible to predict a subset of the population's risk of developing breast cancer. The most aggressive approach to risk reduction—mastectomy prior to the onset of disease—has reduced the risk by ninety per cent or more.

"One of the major goals is the development of interventions that are more readily tolerated," says Worta McCaskill-Stevens, M.D., a program director at the National Cancer Institute. On the horizon are better ways to predict risk without extracting tissue samples. PET scanning and MRIs are noninvasive imaging modalities that may have promise for detecting precancerous lesions. Surgeon Barbara Smith at Boston's Dana-Farber/Partners Cancer Care hopes that noninvasive therapy with microwave radiation or ultrasound may ultimately prove viable as alternatives to surgical lumpectomies.

In clinical trials, the SERM tamoxifen reduced the rate of breast cancer forty to fifty per cent in high-risk women. The development and use of new agents such as Taxol and Herceptin have improved survival rates in women with advanced disease.

Treatment for breast cancer is much less draconian than in the past. New anti-nausea drugs have made chemotherapy easier to tolerate. Biopsies are less invasive. Stereotactic and ultrasound-guided approaches, in which a needle extracts the necessary sample, produce less damage and scarring. Lumpectomy and radiation have replaced mastectomy for small tumors. For larger ones, reconstruction of the breast can now take place at the time of mastectomy.

The National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations (NABCO) is the leading nonprofit information and education resource on breast cancer. Comprised of more than four-hundred member organizations that provide detection, treatment, and care resources for hundreds of thousands of women each year, NABCO *maintains an Information Services Department and a Web site (www.nabco.org) with extensive resources and links. For more information, call 888-80-NABCO.*

Osteoporosis: Silent No More

A decade ago, osteoporosis was characterized as a "silent" disease because the disorder could not be diagnosed until a fractured hip or vertebra signaled its presence. Today, osteoporosis is no longer an occult condition; the widespread availability of DXA X-ray machines to measure bone density has made it possible to identify women with osteoporosis long before fractures occur. Some measure bone density at the hip and spine, and the rest test density at the arm, heel, or finger. New drugs have enabled women to arrest bone porosity. "Six years ago there were only two options for treatment—estrogen and calcitonin," says Ethel Siris, M.D., the Director of the Toni Stabile Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis. "Now we have alendronate and raloxifene as well." Numerous studies have demonstrated the relative virtues of these drugs, in addition to calcium and vitamin D supplements, in maintaining bone mass after menopause. The question today is not *how,* but *who* to treat.

"As women age, their risk of fracturing a bone goes up. A sixty-five-year-old with osteoporosis is likely to break a hip within the next five years," Siris speculates, "but a younger woman with osteoporosis probably won't fracture anything unless she is hit by a truck." Should women in the early stages of menopause take drugs for more than a decade during which their risk of hip or spinal fracture is relatively low, or should they wait until the likelihood of fracture is greater? Siris is interested in encouraging women and their doctors to routinely evaluate risk factors for osteoporosis so that current drugs—as well as others in the FDA pipeline—will be used to best advantage.

> *"Simple approaches to diet and exercise can go a long way in preventing cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis."*

A Future For Gender-Based Medicine

The early decades of the next century will be directed at defining basic differences between the sexes at the molecular and cellular level. Molecular biologist Florence Haseltine has plans to explore "gender-based biology" that will include sex and gene expression, immunologic differences, and changes that take place during early embryonic life.

Although the knowledge gap is gradually closing for postmenopausal women, there is still a huge information void concerning younger women. Legato envisions a future in which women will no longer be seen as premenopausal or postmenopausal but rather as individuals in various stages of development whether they are healthy or ill.

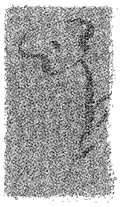
According to endocrinologist Michele Warren, "The emphasis has been on questions surrounding hormone replacement, but there aren't many doctors or researchers who are interested in hormonal disorders prior to menopause." To help grow the data base on premenopausal women, Warren, who directs the multidisciplinary Center for Menopause, Hormonal Disorders, and Women's Health at New York Presbyterian Hospital, runs clinical trials on women with disorders like pituitary disease, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and other problems related to infertility.

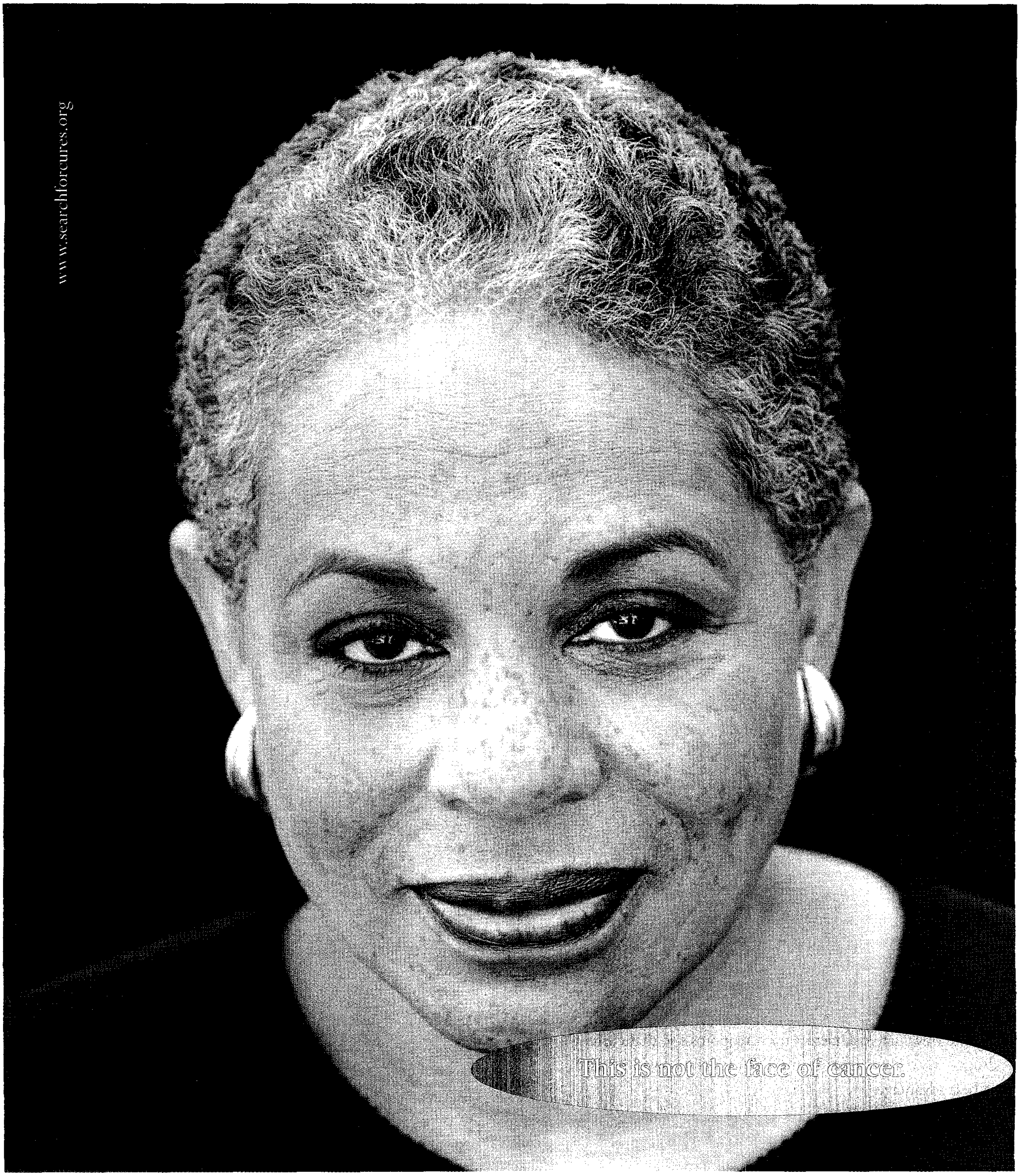
At the other end of the spectrum, ongoing epidemiologic studies are expected to foster low-tech approaches that offer big payoffs. "The field of lifestyle modification and nutrition is really burgeoning," says Manson. "It's yielding simple approaches to diet and exercise that can go a long way in preventing cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis."

"But unless we can show that gender-specific diagnosis and treatment will really change American medicine for the better, we're all going to be out of business," Manson concludes cheerfully. This prospect seems unlikely.

INVESTING IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

As the women's health care movement gathers momentum, **Salomon Smith Barney** is pleased to align itself with a cause of far-reaching social implications. The full-service brokerage firm has produced several cutting-edge reports on women's health and has sponsored a series of symposia and panel discussions to introduce potential investors to promising market options in the growing women's health care industry. Call 800-EARNS-IT, Ext. 1344 for a free copy of "The New Women's Movement," or for more information visit **www.smithbarney.com**.




www.searchforcures.org
This is not the face of cancer.

It's the face of Alexine Clement Jackson. Mother, grandmother and national president of the YWCA. At 50, she found out she had breast cancer, a disease that killed her mother when Alexine was only 4. She credits 12 years in remission to her doctors and advanced medicines developed by America's pharmaceutical company researchers. And pharmaceutical researchers will never stop looking for better medicines and ultimately a cure. It gives people like Alexine hope for the future and the future of their families.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

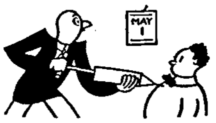
Leading the way in the search for cures

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Shots in the dark.



Millennial Americans have to be the world's most aggressively adventurous human beings. We eagerly rappel down rockfaces, canyoneer across rivers, and paraglide over mountaintops. But those are risks we choose to take. We adopt a very different attitude toward the risks of daily life, no matter how small, which we can't avoid. Although most tap water is safe to drink, we spend millions on bottled brands. Despite declining rates of many major cancers, we are obsessed by our fear of the disease, and of the pesticides, sun, and any food, chemical, or place that somebody suspects might cause it.

So it is not surprising that a growing movement of worried parents, believers in alternative medicine, and political libertarians has emerged to question the safety of the vaccinations that all children are required to have before entering school. Fuelled by warnings on the Internet, their fears are based on the rare adverse reaction that vaccines can cause. And adverse reactions do occur. For example, the Centers for Disease Control has called for an end to the use of the oral polio vaccine, which, because it contains weakened but live virus, triggered the disease in about ten children out of the millions who took it each year. (A newer version eliminates this risk.) And use of the rotavirus vaccine was recently suspended after reports that it caused bowel obstruction in infants.

This summer, the protests persuaded Dan Burton, the melon-shooting Indiana congressman, to convene hearings on vaccine safety, and more are planned for next year. The testimony from parents whose children had suffered violent reactions was passionate and moving. But, for anyone who followed these sessions, one fact always managed to bob above the waves of pseudoscientific argument: childhood vaccinations are the most effective public-health measure in American history.

Most people can't remember a time when polio, measles, diphtheria, and smallpox killed tens of thousands of children each year. But it wasn't long ago. From 1951 to 1954, an average of sixteen thousand children became ill with paralytic polio each year. When the Salk vaccine was introduced, in 1955, the disease began to recede, and it has been twenty years since a live polio transmission was documented in the United States. Half a million cases of measles were reported each year in the early sixties—just before a vaccine became available—and thousands of children died. Last year, there were a hundred cases of measles; none were fatal.

So why has doubt arisen about such a fundamental good? A lack of confidence in public-health policy is certainly part of the reason. But so, ironically, is the remarkable success of vaccines, which has left parents who have never seen a case of polio or measles to focus their attention solely on the failures. Bruce Gellin, a specialist in infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University medical school, was so alarmed by their disaffection that last year he created the National Immunization Information Network. With the help of such medical associations as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the network attempts to provide scientifically sound information about vaccines. "When a child is hurt by something that is supposed to protect him, the impact is devastating," Gellin says. "But we seem to live in a society where no risk is the only risk that is acceptable. Our perceptions have all been skewed."

That's putting it mildly. About three hundred people will drown in their bathtubs this year in the United States; the rest will probably keep bathing. A thousand Americans will choke to death on food, but it won't alter the nation's eating patterns. Yet vaccine opponents apparently would rather

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

imperil the population than accede to the government mandate.

The most influential advocacy group in the campaign against universal vaccination, the National Vaccine Information Center, based in suburban Virginia, is trying to take the debate farther. The organization's president, Barbara Loe Fisher, believes that her son suffered permanent damage from an old version of the diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine which was associated in rare cases with high fevers and convulsions. She maintains that the rise in rates of diabetes, asthma, and even autism over the past three decades may be associated with the growth in the number of vaccines, which, she argues, may weaken a child's immune system. There is no scientific evidence for any such notion. One might as well say that the rise in vaccines since 1960 has caused the increase in the rate of divorce.

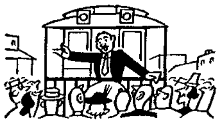
Fisher also suggests that since measles has nearly been eradicated in America we no longer need to vaccinate every child. That would be a dangerous mistake: when the measles-vaccination rate dropped in 1989, the result was a two-year epidemic. (A second shot is now required.) "The one-size-fits-all approach to mass vaccination has not been intelligent, rational, or scientifically sound," Fisher said recently. "Our grandparents got one vaccination—the smallpox. Now our kids get thirty-three doses of ten vaccines by the age of five."

Has there ever been a clearer definition of scientific progress?

—MICHAEL SPECTER

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL

As the Gore campaign goes South, even Bill Clinton is having doubts.



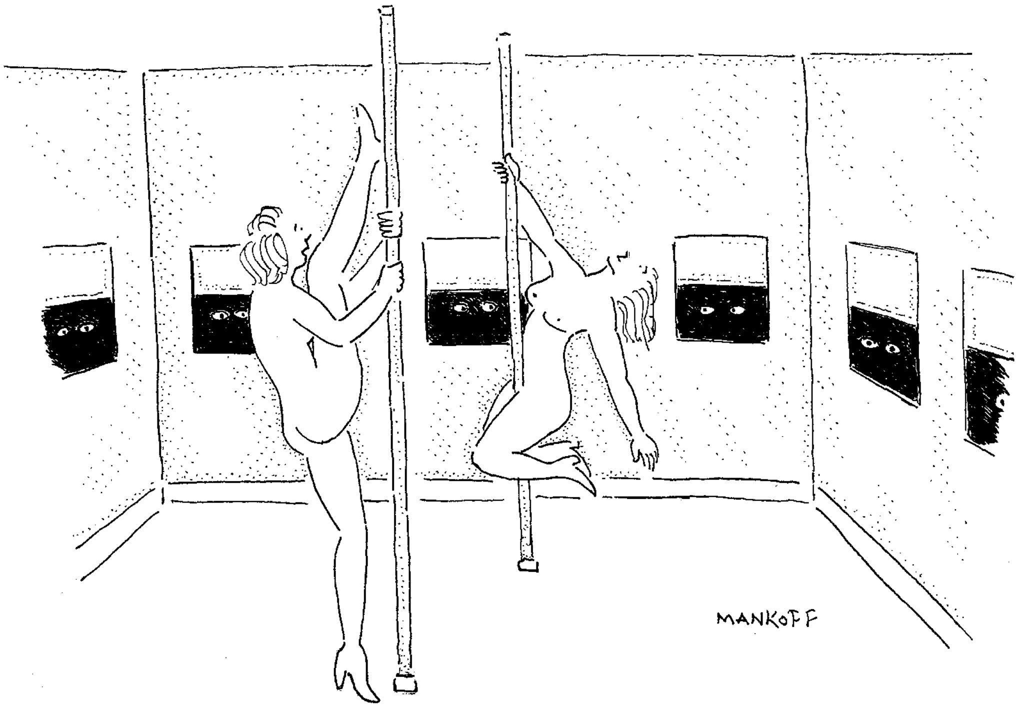
ONE day last week, Al Gore appeared beneath fluorescent lights in a bland, modular office building in the heart of Washington's lobbyist-heavy business district to announce the startling news that he was pulling up stakes and heading, "lock, stock, and barrel," for Tennessee. "It's gonna be an exciting time," he said. "I am excited," he said three more times. He said that his campaign was moving "out of the Beltway and into the heartland."

As Senator Bill Bradley's campaign has come within striking distance of the Vice-President's, the Gore campaign has been looking for ways to perk itself up. A close associate of Gore's compares the Vice-President to "the guy who gets a divorce, and decides he wants to change his whole life, so he paints every room in his house blue. It may make him feel better, but is it really what matters?" More important than changing the location of his headquarters, overhauling the structure and makeup of his staff, or trading white button-downs for deep denim blue, this friend says, is the need for Gore to "find his own voice."

Even his supporters worry that the real Al Gore is not a natural politician. In a recent conversation, President Clinton suggested to a confidant that the only reason Gore ever sought the Presidency was to please his father, Tennessee's Senator Al Gore, Sr., who died last year. "The President," this friend says, thinks that "a lot of Gore's baggage is his father." Clinton went on to say that, although he views Gore's election as critical to cementing his own legacy, he worries that "but for his father, he would have been a professor, or something more solitary." Clinton's friend concurs. "Gore is the most introverted person I've ever seen in public life," he says. "When I watch what he does, it's heroic. He works like a dog—but it's excruciating."

Gore's handlers are working hard to jazz up their candidate's image. Several months ago, according to a Gore campaign worker, a decision was made to send out fund-raising letters in New York which did not include, in the margin of the stationery, the customary roster of important supporters' names. Aides worried that such a list could present "a diversity problem," because it consisted almost entirely of white men, most of them Jewish. But, as Bradley started picking up celebrity endorsements (Harrison Ford, the L.A. Lakers coach Phil Jackson, the director Sidney Pollack), the Gore campaign changed course and began searching for glamorous backers.

So last week, at a fund-raising event geared toward minorities and held at the home of a prominent African-American lawyer in Bethesda, Maryland, Gore was joined on the stage by Bill Cosby and the actress Sonia Braga. Shaquille O'Neal, the basketball star, was supposed to be there to offer his endorsement, but



"No doubt about it. The Internet poses a great threat to personal privacy."

at the last minute he couldn't make it. In his place he sent a sneaker—size 22—giving Gore the opportunity to brag that O'Neal was "my biggest supporter." And, when the candidate joked about his brief career as a rap artist known as Stiff Daddy, the crowd was delighted.

—Jane Mayer

CANDIDATE BEATTY?

A thousand friends showed up at the Beverly Hilton last week to cheer on Warren Beatty as he accepted the Eleanor Roosevelt Award from the Southern California chapter of Americans for Democratic Action. Here's what some of the famously vain actor's Hollywood colleagues had to say about a possible Beatty candidacy.

Roseanne Barr (addressing Beatty in a video tribute): "You're one of my idols. I love all your work. It's all so very left-wing and radical. I love it, babe. But you know I'm considering running against you in the year 2000, because, though I do consider you a fine piece of ass, I cannot believe that any man can fix anything anymore."

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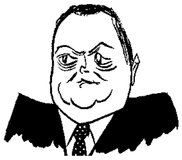

Larry Flynt: "Of course I'd vote for him. Between Gore and Bradley, all you got is dumb and dumber. And Warren's always loved women, which might help him."

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Dustin Hoffman (on video): "When he was eight or nine years old, Warren somehow obtained, as only Warren could, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's home-telephone number . . . and Eleanor answered. . . . One thing led to another, and Warren said to the First Lady, 'Where are you? What are you wearing?'"

•

Garry Shandling (on video): "Warren, listen, if you run and get elected, make sure that you get your name above the title of the country."

•

Richard Lovett, president of Creative Artists Agency (on video): "When Warren asked me for advice as his agent about whether to choose politics or entertainment, naturally my first instinct was 'What's in it for me?'"

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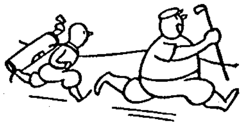
Warren Beatty (taking the podium and gesturing toward the ceiling): "I had in mind a different kind of lighting."

—Ann Louise Bardach

THE SPORTING LIFE

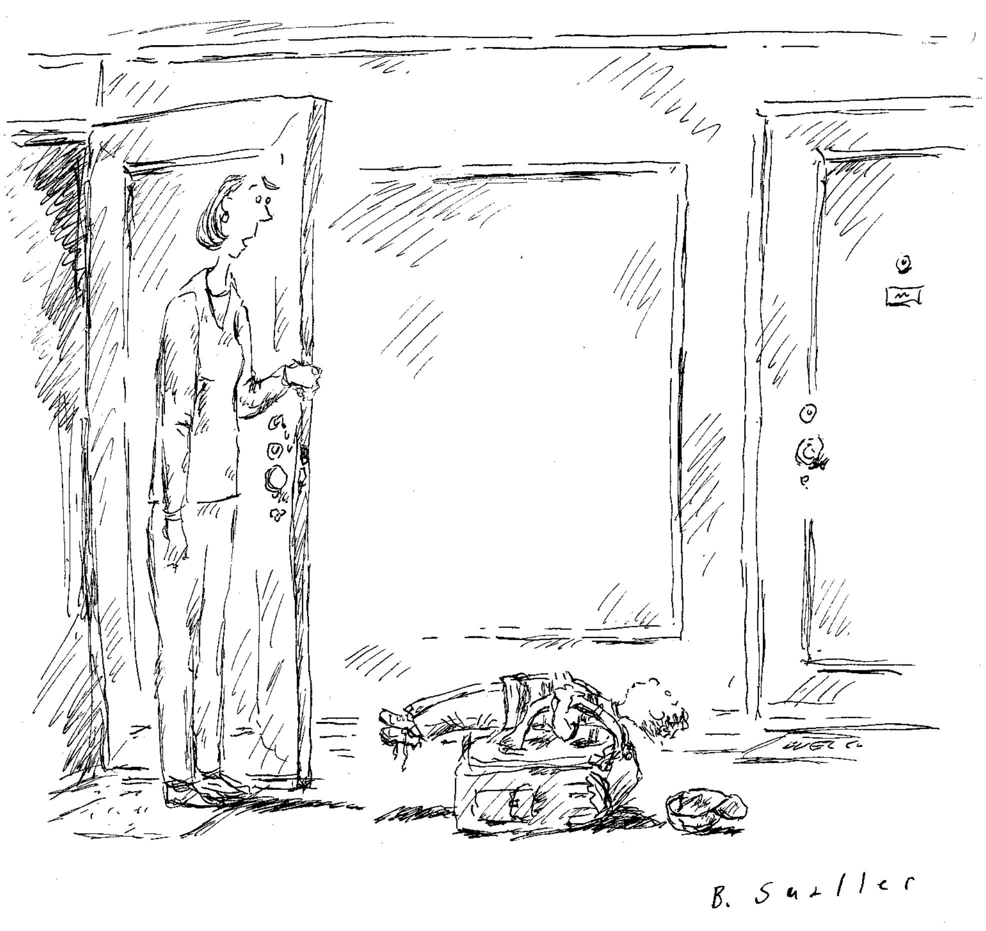
Divots and drama at the Ryder Cup.



The real appeal of the Ryder Cup matches, the international competition played every two years between all-star teams of American and European pros, is not their venerable history, which stretches back to 1927, or even the supposed purity of the matches, which are contested for national honor, not for lucre. What weekend golfers relish is the way the Ryder has of eliciting truly awful golf shots, as well as brilliant ones, and of reducing otherwise imperturbable athletes to emotional basket cases. By that standard, this year's competition, even with its miraculous American comeback on Sunday, was no match for the 1991 cup, the "War on the Shore," which took place on Kiawah Island, in South Carolina. That was the Ryder when the American Mark Calcavecchia, after splashing down on the seventeenth, had to be led away, sobbing, to what one could only hope was on-site psychiatric care.

The latest matches, played out last week at The Country Club, in Brookline, Massachusetts—a sort of museum of New England Waspiness—were cleaner and brighter, more Frank Capra than Ingmar Bergman, but had their humanizing moments nonetheless. There was the start of Mark O'Meara's painful collapse on Sunday afternoon, for example, when he chunked his approach shot on the seventeenth, sending up a toupee-size divot and leaving the ball yards short of the green. He looked both dazed and stricken, and we duffers knew exactly how he felt. We've hit that shot a thousand times. On the other hand, the Sunday-afternoon transformation of David Duval was like one of those George Romero movies, when the zombies, blinking in the sunlight, come twitching back to life. As he began rolling in birdies against Sweden's Jesper Parnevik, Duval, famous for hiding his feelings behind mirrored, insect-eyed sunglasses, found himself pumping his arm, uncertainly at first (it was the gesture of someone reaching up to change a hot light bulb), but then with what almost resembled emotion.

No one tried harder, or showed more feeling, than the unlikely duo of Sergio Garcia, the nineteen-year-old *niño prodigio*, and Parnevik, the dorky-lidded Swede, who were paired in the four-man matches. Capering about like some inspired vaudeville team—Lucky and Pozzo on a good day—they also took touching, almost fraternal care of each other, lining up putts together and studying lies like a couple of mismatched agronomists. Separated during the Sunday singles matches, they didn't play nearly as well, and in the end that was the story of this year's cup. The Europeans were better as pairs; the Americans, uncomfortable in the clubby foursome format, thrived as loners. A fitting conclusion, perhaps, and one that says something or other about national character. It should also be noted that if the cup were awarded for haberdashery the Europeans would have won hands-down. The shirts the Americans wore on Sunday, with silk-screened photographs of former Ryder Cup



"A lot of homework?"

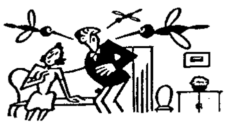
• •

teams, looked as if they had been cut from a roll of motel wallpaper.

Golfwear was an important theme at this year's cup, as it is at most tournaments nowadays. The crowds waiting to get into the merchandise tent were often as deep as those lining the fairways, and the frenzy inside—souvenir hunters elbowing each other aside and pawing through stacks of sweaters, hats, and shirts—felt just like Monday morning at that other great New England institution, Filene's Basement. The golfers may have played for love and honor, but the ripe smell of money wafted everywhere, up and over the course's stony outcroppings and through the venerable stands of pine and oak: not old, Waspy country-club money but freshly minted corporate megabucks. Except for Michael Jordan's, I didn't see a single black face, and there weren't many young or female ones. To be at the Ryder Cup this year was to be at a rally of middle-aged white guys—*cheerful* middle-aged white guys, it should be added, who for a moment believed we were in direct touch with our inner selves. —CHARLES MCGRATH

THE MOSQUITO WARS

Suburbanites batten down the hatches.



THE dead crow I passed last week on my running path, along the old Croton Aqueduct in Hastings-on-Hudson, had an oversignificant look about it, like something out of David Lynch or Hitchcock: a Sign. But it wasn't, in this instance, a sign of moral rot or complacency at the heart of suburban life; it was a sign of a sickness that was thought at first to be St. Louis encephalitis but has now been reclassified as a type of West Nile virus, a disease never before seen in the Western Hemisphere, spread by mosquitoes to birds and humans. And now, apparently, moving north from Queens (had it landed at Kennedy?) to Manhattan and on to Westchester.

One of the great questions about the suburbs has always been: What's worse, for nothing to happen or for something to happen? Well, there's a lot to be said for nothing. It can make for a certain amount of edginess among overprivileged teen-agers, but it beats Kosovo and East Timor, and a well-tended inner life is cheaper than lawn care. West Nile virus, however, was definitely something.

After four cases of the virus turned up in Westchester, health officials decided to spray the county. As in Queens and Manhattan, helicopters would do the job, but, unlike the city, which used the insecticide malathion, Westchester would employ a somewhat less toxic pesticide, brand-named Anvil, a synthetic pyrethroid chemically similar to the natural bug-killing vapors emitted by chrysanthemums.

Why Anvil instead of malathion? Anvil has a slightly sinister, Wile E. Coyote-ish sound to it, but apparently the stuff comes out in a finer spray, better at penetrating those lush suburban glades where mosquitoes flourish. And there is something else: malathion is said to be potentially damaging to car finishes. Who knew what kind of fuss Westchester residents might kick up if the pearlescent coats of their Lexuses and Audis and Volvos got pitted overnight?

We would be sprayed, we were told, on Monday evening between seven and nine. We were advised to close the windows and bring toys and pet bowls inside.

We covered the sandbox. We put the Little Tikes Cozy Coupe and the Radio Flyer in the garage. We cooked dinner and joked nervously. At precisely six-fifty-nine, a police cruiser flashed around the block, its loudspeaker blaring an urgent but incomprehensible announcement: "WARGHLMMBA-GTZABEN!" The noise Dopplered away. Something was happening.

We sat down to dinner. The baby

threw his pasta around; the big boys grinned and listened for helicopter rotors. My wife and I looked at each other.

The first chopper came over at seven-forty-seven. We ran to the windows. It was a helicopter, all right, flying low: big concussions, lights flashing. Too dark to see any vapor. Back to dessert. There was a bad moment after dinner when it turned out that the eleven-year-old had switched the vent on one of the air-conditioners to "Open." Outside air had been blowing in for half an hour. "I thought that meant recirculate," he said, looking worried. His younger brother, a more jovial type, laughed. "It's flower vapor!" he said.

I'm with the eleven-year-old. I worry. Initial thoughts of the Fort Knox knockout-spray scene in "Goldfinger" turned to thoughts of the crop-dusting sequence in "North by Northwest," which turned to memories of a year ago, when we somehow managed to not go back to war with Iraq over its nerve-gas factories. All they'd have to do, I thought at the time, was send a small plane over. . . . Best to put it out of one's mind. The suburbs, after all, are the place where nothing ever happens.

Toward midnight, I spotted a big, suspicious-looking mosquito flying dizzily around the bathroom. I swatted it.

—JAMES KAPLAN

DEPT. OF FACE-LIFTS

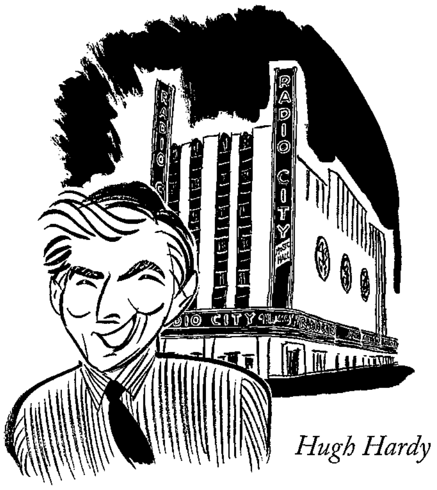
From men's room to marquee, it's the new-old Radio City.

WHEN the architect Hugh Hardy got the commission to restore Radio City Music Hall, he didn't do what he usually does when he is hired to fix up a famous old building, which is to avoid making it a picture-perfect re-creation of the past. Hardy prefers to leave the marks of time on the buildings he restores, as he did at the New Amsterdam Theatre, where he delighted in keeping the Art Moderne marquee that had been added to the theatre's ornate, turn-of-the-century façade.

At Radio City, however, he was eager to make the building look as if it had survived entirely unchanged from the day it opened, in 1932. Radio City's new operators, Cablevision Systems Corporation, spent seventy million dollars trying to make the hall look, in Hardy's words, "like I hadn't done anything at all."

Actually, the only people who will think Radio City really looks the same are the ones who were there in 1932. The hall has changed a lot in the sixty-seven years since it opened, but the changes were subtle, and largely accidental. "It kept getting darker and darker inside," said Hardy, who was born just a few months before the hall opened. "They thought they weren't changing anything, but they kept repainting it, and somehow it got a shade darker each time."

So Hardy's first job was to lighten the color of the famous series of arches that form a rainbowlike frame around the proscenium and extend outward to become the auditorium's ceiling. They are now a pale stippled beige. Then he ordered all five thousand nine hundred and one of the music hall's seats re-covered with a warm, terra-cotta-colored mohair, similar to the originals'. The effect of these changes is to soften the huge auditorium, making it seem intimate and almost gentle, but without losing any of its spectacular, almost bombastic monumentality. Radio City may now be the only example of softly bombastic architecture in New York.



Hugh Hardy

"Radio City was close to perfect when it opened, and then it just kept getting compromised," Hardy said as he walked through the hall last week, stepping around construction crews. Among the compromises that Hardy had to undo was the removal of one of the most famous pieces of art in the hall, a mural by Stuart Davis, entitled "Men Without Women," which the Rockefellers had given to the Museum of Modern Art. The mural, which pictures manly accoutrements such as playing cards and cigars, has been returned to its original location, in the lower-level men's lounge. Hardy has also restored the rest of the hall's art, along with the carpets, the Ruth Reeves wall coverings, and the modernist furniture and interiors by the American designer Donald Deskey.

Hardy and his firm, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, have been tangling with history for a long time. When the architect designed a building in 1979 to replace a Greek Revival town house on West Eleventh Street, which had been blown up by the Weathermen in 1970, he refused to replicate the original, and insisted that the new structure have a modernist cant, to acknowledge the rupture. And he was given free rein to make lots of changes when he redid Windows on the World, since that was one landmark whose architecture nobody remembered anyway.

But Radio City has brought out a rigid preservationist stance in Hardy. "They originally wanted to do up the place with much more glitz," he said. "I'm glad they gave up on that, because this is one of the most sophisticated interiors in the world. It isn't Art Deco, and it isn't Art Moderne—it is a thing unto itself, a wholly original work of twentieth-century art. It's so amazing that it happened, since it was built by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who really enjoyed building fake English barns up at Pocantico Hills."

Hardy tried to change the letters that spell "Radio City" on the hall's famous neon marquee from red to something closer to their original purplish hue. This is the one part of his restoration that seems to have backfired. After a couple of days of shining a soft purple glow onto Sixth Avenue, the lettering was ordered back to red again at the end of last week. "People thought it looked too much like a bordello," Hardy said. But everyone was happy with Hardy's discovery of the original color of the words "Music Hall," which now gleam in neon the color of gold.

—PAUL GOLDBERGER

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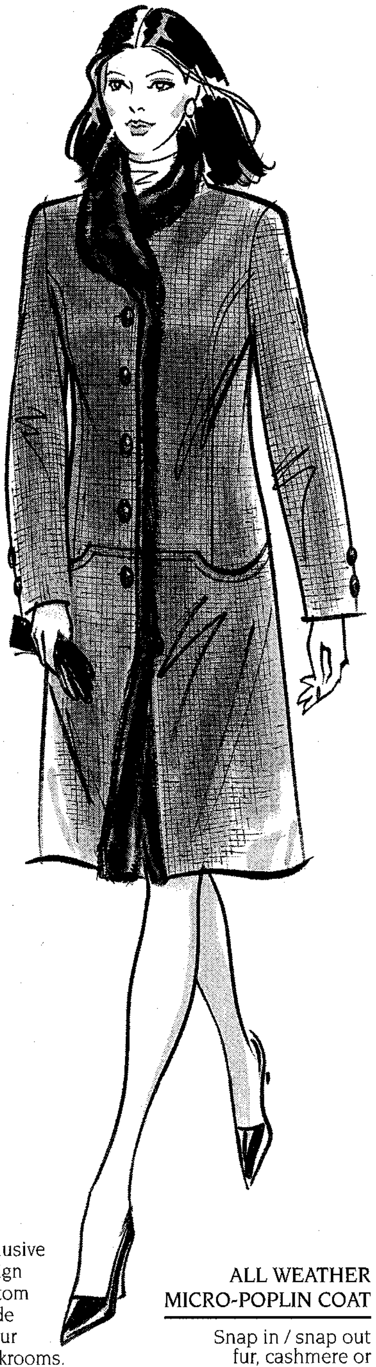

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ANNALS OF DISASTER

THE SHIP THAT VANISHED

Did the crew of the Fantome ever stand a chance?

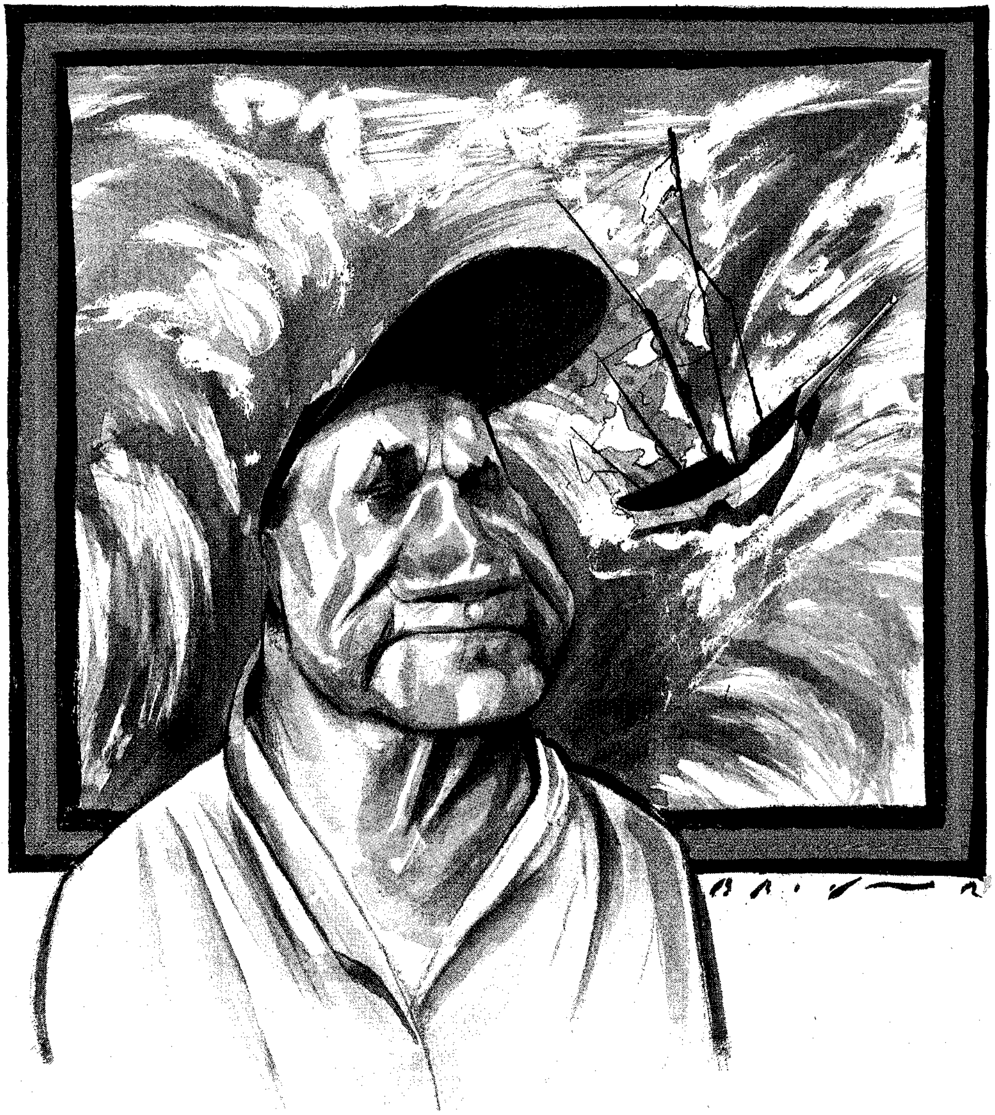
BY JOHN VAILLANT

WINDJAMMER BAREFOOT CRUISES has been a fixture in the Caribbean for nearly half a century. Like most of its younger competitors, Windjammer specializes in waterborne escapes from the developed world. Unlike the clientele of more traditional cruise lines, however, Windjammer's passengers travel under sail in massive pleasure yachts, most of which have been salvaged from the fallen empires of early-twentieth-century industrialists, financiers, and nobility. The Windjammer code on these voyages is informal, fun, and benignly piratical; onboard, bare feet and rum swizzles are the order of the day. The crews are island-born and friendly; when other Windjammer vessels are encountered, mock battles ensue, complete with cannon fire.

Windjammer's founder and sole owner is Michael Burke, who, with the help of his family (he has six children, and they are all in the business) and hundreds of West Indians, purchased, rebuilt, and launched the largest fleet of sailing ships in the postwar world and—most remarkable—made it profitable. During the fifty-odd years he has been sailing in the Caribbean, Captain Burke, who is seventy-five, has emerged as a founding father of the South Florida, sailor-party-animal life style that Jimmy Buffett popularized in his songs. The Captain's current fleet boasts six ships, which sail between the Lesser Antilles and the Yucatán year-round. Last year, some twenty thousand customers booked passage with the company, which is based in Miami Beach. This pattern was interrupted on October 27, 1998, when Hurricane Mitch, the most destructive storm to hit the Caribbean in more than two centuries, overtook the company's flagship, the Fantome, resulting in the Atlantic's worst sailing accident in more than forty years.

The Fantome, originally commissioned as a destroyer in the Italian Navy, was one of the largest sailing vessels in the world—a two-hundred-and-eighty-two-foot-long four-masted schooner, completed seventy-two years ago in Livorno, Italy. In the late twenties, the Duke of Westminster turned the ship into a pleasure yacht, replete with a ballroom and wood-burning fireplaces; he sailed her throughout the Mediterranean with a full serving staff and even a cow for milk. Arthur Guinness, the British brewing magnate, bought her in the thirties, and gave her the name Fantome (French for "ghost"). With the onset of the Second World War, she languished in Seattle until Aristotle Onassis acquired her, in 1956, as a wedding gift for Princess Grace of Monaco. There is a story that Prince Rainier suspected that Onassis wanted a piece of his gaming business, so Onassis never got a wedding invitation—and the Princess never got her yacht. The vessel was left to rust in various ports around Europe until Captain Burke bought her from Onassis, in 1969. Michael Burke loves his fleet, but the Fantome was the prize.

As late as four days before Hurricane Mitch struck, ninety-three passengers who had booked for the Fantome's six-day cruise from the Gulf of Honduras to Belize's Turneffe Islands were laying out clothes and shopping for bathing suits. Some of the passengers, including Anthony Moffa, a thirty-six-year-old engineer from Pennsylvania, were watching the Weather Channel, and what Moffa saw—a tropical storm hundreds of miles away, headed toward a place he would not be going—did not concern him much. But early on Saturday, October 24th, Mitch was upgraded to a hurricane; and by Sunday, when many of the passengers were descending from the clouds over the endless banana plantations of Honduras, Mitch was amplifying at an alarming rate. During this twenty-four-hour period, its barometric pressure plunged from nine hundred and seventy-six millibars to nine hundred and twenty-four. Such a precipitate drop is called an explosive deepening; it happens very seldom, but when it does it portends a storm of extraordinary violence. By now, it was common knowledge that Mitch was a monster in the making. Earlier predictions had the storm heading north, but northern cold fronts had moved in, steadily pushing its anticipated trajectory down, like the needle on a compass. Due west would mean a direct hit in the Gulf of Honduras.



Windjammer founder Michael Burke says, "I'm the mother and the father of these ships."

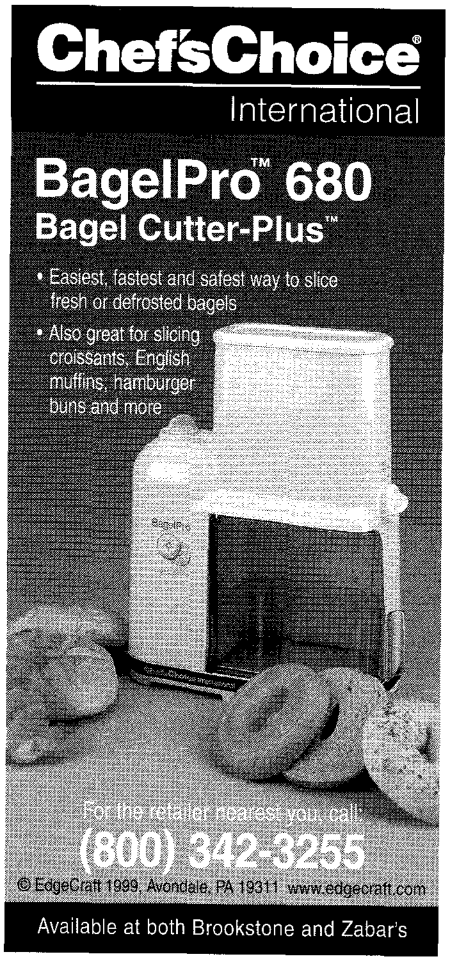
STEVE BRODNER

Windjammer was aware of this, but once a cruise has been scheduled it is logistically hard to stop. In addition, cancellations are costly, in terms both of lost revenue and of bad P.R. During the afternoon and evening of October 25th, passengers were shuttled twenty miles through a driving rain, from the airport in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to a small wooden dock in Omoa, on the gulf, where launches waited to take them out to the Fantome. Moffa, who was on holiday with his girlfriend, Karyn Rutledge, thought that it was just typical rain-forest weather. In fact, it was a rain-bearing outrider generated by Mitch, still more than four hundred miles away. "It was comical, it was raining so hard," Moffa recalls. "You had horizontal rain in sheets. I started singing the theme from 'Gilligan's Island'; it kind of broke the tension. When we saw the ship, it was a beautiful thing—all lit up. We thought, It can't be that bad."

But Guyan March, the English captain, was worried; this was only his second season in the gulf, and over the phone he told his fiancée, Annie Bleasdale, a professional sailor, that he was reluctant to take on passengers. Captain Burke's eldest son, Michael D. Burke, who since 1988 has run International Maritime Resources, Windjammer's ship-operations arm, later told me that he had suggested to Captain March that he drop the passengers in Omoa and get out of there right away. However, according to the younger Burke, March told him he was going to wait because passengers were still arriving, dinner was being served, and a band was expected. Burke's son then said that there was no further discussion of cancelling the cruise.

HURRICANES are the Atlantic equivalents of typhoons or cyclones, and they are our atmosphere's most violent means of expression. Every year, from June to November, between eighty and a hundred so-called African waves are spawned from a seasonal convergence of high- and low-altitude winds over the mountains of East Africa. Once these rhythmic, westbound pulses of warm air roll across the Sahel and off the coast of Senegal, it takes them around two weeks to cross the Atlantic. Only a fraction ever reach the next level of development, called a tropical depression, a spinning low-pressure system with winds of not more than thirty-eight miles an hour. It was at this stage, while still a harmless disturbance, that the infant Mitch was given a working title: Tropical Depression No. 13.

Once a tropical storm hits seventy-four m.p.h., it becomes a "minimal" hurricane, or a Category 1. At sea, such a storm would be avoided, and, on shore, people living in mobile homes would have cause for concern. However, hurricanes generally don't start doing serious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damage until they reach Category 3—about a hundred and twenty m.p.h. This is when objects we think of as being permanent start to fall down, tear loose, and blow away. But, as a wind's speed increases, its destructive power grows dramatically. A Category 5 hurricane can be eight times as destructive as a Category 1. Anything over a hundred and fifty-six m.p.h. is considered a Category 5, a classification the National Weather Service terms "catastrophic." Five is as high as the Saffir-Simpson hurricane-intensity scale goes; it's like a nine on the Richter scale (the Turkish earthquake last month was a 7.4). An Atlantic hurricane of this magnitude doesn't happen very often—the odds of a Category 5 striking a given location, even in the hurricane-prone Gulf of Honduras, are one in every hundred and sixty years—but, when it does, mayhem ensues on a grand scale and pieces of the world are erased. Mobile homes, the canaries in the coal mine of hurricane measurement, are obliterated under these conditions, along with trees, buildings, and even grass. The recent Hurricane Floyd was, briefly, a Category 4 before being downgraded to a destructive tropical storm; Hurricane Andrew, the 1992 hurricane that devastated portions of Florida and Louisiana and became the costliest natural disaster in United States history, was also a Category 4.

According to Anthony Moffa, Mitch was formally acknowledged to the Fantome's passengers on the evening of October 25th. It was also at that point that the ship's itinerary was changed for the first time—from the northern, Turneffe Islands to the more southerly Bay Islands. By this time, Mitch had mutated into a Category 4, and its projected course was now due west. While the passengers slept, still expecting to wake up and go snorkeling, the fate of the Fantome was being sealed, and Captain March was probably having the first glimmerings of what was to come. "Karyn heard a loud noise about 2 A.M. and said she felt the ship turn," Moffa remembers. "There were rough seas that night—ten to twelve feet—and twenty-five-knot winds. It was no problem in such a big ship, but, still, there was a pucker factor there."

Moffa is a mechanical engineer, a self-described rationalist, and the "pucker factor" is militarese for fear. Karyn Rutledge's senses had not betrayed her, either. At 9:30 A.M. on Monday, October 26th, Captain Guyan, as March was called onboard, gathered the passengers in the Fantome's saloon, a large, enclosed dining area at the stern of the ship. The morning meeting is a Windjammer tradition; it's called Story Time, and it's when the captain tells the passengers a bit about where they are and what activities will be offered that day. Captain Guyan's story that morning was short and to the point: Hurricane Mitch posed too great a threat to continue the voyage, so they were headed north, for Belize City, where a chartered aircraft would take the passengers back to Miami. Then he apologized for the inconvenience. "There was a pause for a moment," Moffa recalls. "You're thinking, Damn it, my vacation is ruined! Then somebody in the back said, 'Thanks for keeping us safe.' And then everybody started to clap."

GUYAN MARCH grew up in England, racing dinghies off the Cornish coast with his younger brother, Paul, who worked as a relief mate for Windjammer. Their mother, Jennie March, who is the commodore of a sailing club, recalls the pleasure her sons took in "staying out longer than the adults and bashing their heads against the weather." Guyan had a real knack for it, and by the time he was eighteen he was skippering ninety-foot yachts in the Mediterranean; when he heard about Windjammer, through a friend, he was quick to sign on. Many of Windjammer's captains have been from the British Isles, but Guyan was the youngest. At thirty-two, he had already been at the helm of Windjammer ships for ten years. According to one Windjammer veteran, Captain Neil Carmichael, a Scotsman, Guyan "had a gift—he was a natural."

The Fantome arrived at Belize City at eleven-thirty Monday morning, and, even as the passengers were getting ready to disembark, the crew was preparing the ship for the worst. "They were tying down the sails," Moffa recalls, "taking down rigging. People were running around with electric drills, screwing down the bench lids on deck. I would guarantee that not one of those guys wanted to be there if he had a choice, but the guys on that ship—I don't think any of them were being held against their will. They were having fun doing their jobs; there was no bitching and moaning, no tension; they were joking."

Specially chartered speedboats arrived, and Captain Guyan stood by the gangway and shook hands with the disembarking passengers, apologizing, again, to each one. Ten "nonessential" crew were also let off at this time, including all the women, but thirty crew members remained on board. As the Fantome threaded her way back through the barrier reef toward open water, her former passengers were being hustled through the airport outside Belize City. The spare, gym-size building was now a madhouse, filled with anxious tourists trying to escape what, in a matter of hours, was predicted to be ground zero.

Laurie Fischer, a Canadian and the ship's purser, was one of the last people to get off the ship, and she and Karyn Rutledge sat together on the flight back to Miami. "Laurie and the rest of the crew had been keeping a really brave front up till then," Rutledge told me. "But when I asked her how she thought things looked for the ship she said, 'Just pray. Just pray.' Then she started to cry."

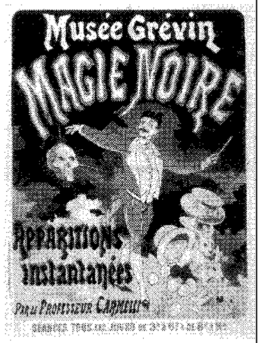
During the previous night, the younger Burke and Captain Guyan had talked by radio and decided to make a run to the north, heading for open water in the Gulf of Mexico, a journey of two and a half days. However, this idea was scrapped in Belize City; when Burke, back in Miami, charted the course, he realized he had underestimated Mitch's reach. The hurricane's feeder bands and their attendant winds were already battering the northern Yucatán coast.

ATLANTIC hurricanes generally move westward and have a tendency to turn, or "recurve," northward, away from the equator. Because of this and because of the northeast wind's tendency to push you into the leading edge of the storm, sailors refer to the north side of a hurricane as the Dangerous Semicircle. The south side is known as the Navigable Semicircle; here, the winds come from the northwest and west and can help push a vessel out the back of a westward-moving system. However, the fact that Mitch was a slow-moving hurricane negated most of the advantages associated with the Navigable Semicircle, and the fact that the Fantome was a slow-moving ship meant that outrunning it was out of the question.

But so was staying in Belize City. A ship at the dock, or even at anchor, is a helpless target and runs the risk of getting pounded to pieces. Going to sea in a hurricane is standard procedure for big ships, though it must be said that most vessels the size of the Fantome can travel two or three times faster than her maximum speed of seven knots. For a ship with adequate speed and sea room, hurricanes are relatively easy to outmaneuver—not unlike dodging a bulldozer in an empty parking lot.

Twenty-four hours earlier, Captain Guyan had discussed his rapidly dwindling options over the phone with his close friend Captain Ed Snowdon, a former Windjammer skipper, and decided to head a hundred and twenty miles south of Belize City, to the Bahía de Amatique, a shallow bay with a small, naturally enclosed harbor called Puerto Barrios. Captains seeking refuge from storms refer to sheltered places like this as "hurricane holes," but this plan, too, was ultimately rejected; Captain Guyan was leery of boxing himself in. Only one option remained: head southeast for Roatán, the biggest of the Bay Islands, and shelter in its lee while Mitch passed to the north. In theory, the twenty-five-mile-long island would block the heaviest seas and some of the wind and, as the wind swung around, Captain Guyan would move the Fantome accordingly, keeping the island between her and the hurricane.

Mitch was now three hundred and fifty miles across, and satellite images were showing a cloud footprint that extended from the Florida Keys to the Pacific Ocean. Because there would have been so much water in the air, being driven so hard by the wind, Captain Stuart Larcombe, a former skipper on the Fantome, speculated recently that Guyan and his mates on deck were probably wearing masks and snorkels in order to see and breathe. However, masks and snorkels would not have been much use against Mitch, which by 1 P.M. on Monday, October 26th, had



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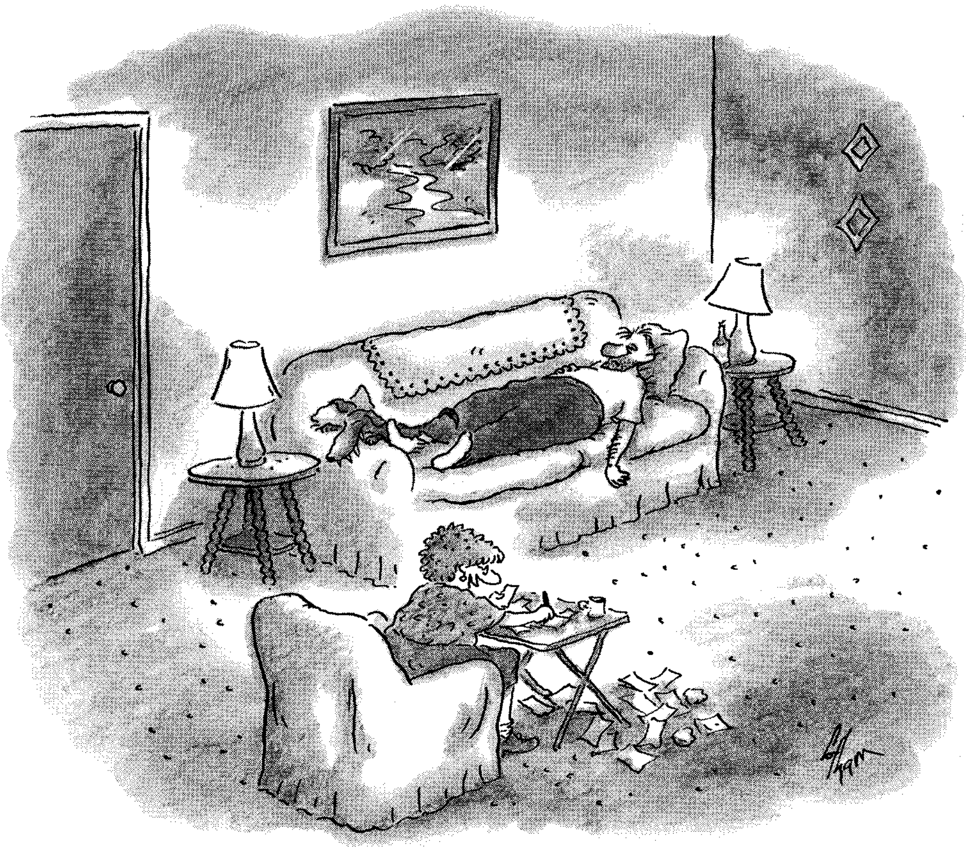

"I've consolidated all our bills into one missed payment."

been upgraded to a Category 5. Mitch was now two hundred miles away, with winds in excess of a hundred and eighty m.p.h. When a hurricane grows as powerful as this, it will actually carry tornadoes inside it. These explosions of localized energy cause unlikely juxtapositions of objects to occur: hardwood broom handles are impaled by shards of Plexiglas; trees are pierced, dartlike, by the quills of parrot feathers; a magazine can be left on a table, undisturbed, while the building around it is tossed away like a straw hat. But, mostly, things just fly apart as if they had been caught up in some sort of cataclysmic tantrum.

At 5 A.M. on Tuesday, October 27th, after a rough but manageable crossing, the Fantome made the western end of Roatán. She was running her engines and, though her jibs had blown out earlier, she had her forestaysail and mainsail up, as much for power as to hold her steady to the wind in the progressively roughening seas. Throughout the night, the Fantome had been in radio contact with the younger Burke at the Windjammer office, which is housed in a former radio station in Miami Beach. Hurricane-dodging is part of Windjammer's annual routine, so Captain Burke was not involved in the early planning, but that morning Michael Burke called his father at his home, on Biscayne Bay.

The ten-o'clock forecast indicated that Mitch had taken an unexpected turn toward the southeast, almost an about-face from its previous course. This meant that the hurricane was now moving away from the ship, but also that Mitch was a juggernaut capable of anything. The accuracy of the forecast was in doubt, however: that day, the weather satellite that covers the northwest Caribbean was malfunctioning, and the Weather Service had to compensate with a less accurate image from another satellite.

In retrospect, this was a significant moment: the last chance that Windjammer and Captain Guyan had to save the crew. At the west end of Roatán is a deep, narrow anchorage called Dixon Cove; throughout the morning, the Fantome, underpowered as she was, still had the mobility to reach it. Had Captain Guyan taken this opportunity, it would have been with the knowledge that he might be sacrificing the ship in order to save the men (though, in the end, Roatán suffered remarkably little damage). However, by 1 P.M. Mitch had turned yet again, this time toward the southwest. It was as if Mitch were scanning the sea with a baleful, Cyclopean eye until it caught sight of the Fantome. Its new course was a beeline for the ship, and by midafternoon the Fantome was fully in the thrall of Mitch's gigantic eye. A hurricane's strongest winds occur at the edge, or wall, of the eye, and Mitch's eye—twenty-two miles wide and reaching ten miles into the sky—was less than forty miles away. All around it, air and water, gravity and buoyancy, the world and the laws that govern it, were being puréed.

A FEW miles to the northeast, Mitch had reached the island of Guanaja. Afterward, many of the houses there looked to one Canadian relief worker "as if they had been blown up; they were in pieces all over the place." Half the trees on the island were flattened and the other half were so completely stripped that they looked as though they had been through a forest fire. As Mitch passed over, the air pressure was changing so rapidly it made people's ears pop. Survivors described the sound as a cross between the low rumble of heavy trucks and the shrieking roar of jet engines; it lasted for three days.

By now, Captain Guyan was simply trying to survive. His second mate, Onassis Reyes, a twenty-six-year-old Panamanian, and chief mate, Emmanuel (Brasso) Frederick, a forty-five-year-old Antiguan, were in the pilothouse, at the forward end of the ship. They were steering with an electric joystick connected to the rudder via hydraulic lines, but keeping their footing on a surface that was now rolling through ninety-degree arcs would have taken as much energy as keeping the ship on course. The chief engineer, Constantin Bucur, a Romanian, and his assistants would have been below in the engine room. The rest of the crew would most likely have been aft, holed up in the saloon, behind doors that had been screwed shut from the outside in order to keep them from being blown open by breaking waves forty to fifty feet high. One way to comprehend Mitch's impact on the Fantome and her crew that afternoon is to picture the ship—seven hundred tons and almost as long as a football field—being thrown off the roof of a house over and over again.

At four o'clock, Michael Burke called the ship on the satellite phone. Seated at his desk in Windjammer's quiet, air-conditioned offices on Bay Road, he listened while Captain Guyan told him that the Fantome's staysails were ripping away. Burke was the last person to hear Guyan's voice before the phone went dead, at four-thirty that afternoon, probably because the ship's antennae were torn off. "Toward the end, I could hear him kind of gasping," Michael told me months later. He was sitting in his office, on the wall of which hangs a large photograph of the Fantome under full sail, looking glorious and unsinkable. He imitated Captain Guyan's gasping sound; it was the sound of great physical effort and, probably, fear. "The last words I can remember him saying were '*Whoo*—that was a big one.' " Michael put his hands to his face and sighed heavily. It was not a sigh of fatigue; it was the kind of breath one takes when overcome by great emotion, or preparing for a long, deep dive. No one knows what happened to the Fantome after the satellite phone cut out.

At 4:40 P.M., ten minutes after Windjammer lost contact with the Fantome, a meteorologist flying in a hurricane-reconnaissance plane registered a gust of two hundred and eight miles an hour—the highest wind speed ever recorded with scientific instruments in a hurricane. Early on the morning of the twenty-eighth, Captain Guyan's fiancée, who was in England, had an unsettling dream. "I knew they'd lost contact with the ship," Annie Bleasdale recalls, "but I didn't think anything of it; that often happens in storms. But early the next morning I dreamed that Guyan was with me in bed. He was dressed in white, and in the dream I knew that he wouldn't be there when I woke up, that this was goodbye." For several nights afterward, Bleasdale says that she awoke to find a hazy presence floating over her bed. Theosophists are familiar with this

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phenomenon; they describe it as an astral body. "I used to call him Angel," Bleasdale says. "The crew absolutely loved him."

By October 31st, the hurricane had moved on to alter the lives and landscapes of Honduras and Nicaragua. The rain that fell was so torrential it had to be measured in feet. For days afterward, trees, cows, and the roofs of houses were seen drifting throughout the Yucatán Basin, some as much as two hundred miles from land. By then, the former African wave had been a trackable entity for over a month. More than eleven thousand people died.

THE AFTERMATH

THE search for the Fantome lasted for three weeks and covered more than a hundred and forty thousand square miles. Except for a number of life jackets, life rafts, and fragments of woodwork from the deck, no sign of the ship has been found. Captains and Coast Guard officials familiar with severe storms and missing ships find this "mysterious" and "troubling." Equally puzzling is the fact that the ship's hydrostatic emergency beacon never activated; therefore, one can only guess at her location. She could be lying in a hundred feet of water off the coast of Honduras, or in four thousand feet of water east of Guanaja. However, given the absence of wreckage or bodies, it is most likely that she sank with great suddenness.

When the search was finally called off, Windjammer experienced a collective emotional collapse. The magnitude of the loss forced this family business, which prefers to handle problems in-house, to seek outside help, including lawyers, publicity experts, and trauma consultants of the sort engaged by airlines after fatal crashes. It is the family atmosphere that draws many employees to the company, and, in a business that requires long separations from home, Windjammer crews tend to function almost like surrogate families. But when the blood families—the mothers, fathers, wives, and children of the crew, who are mostly West Indian and poor—needed Windjammer most, a line was drawn.

In November, Windjammer representatives fanned out across the Caribbean to visit the crew's relatives and try to explain what had happened—in particular, why the crew didn't get off when they still had a chance. What Michael D. Burke and Windjammer's customer-service manager, Stehli Newson, couldn't explain was why the company carries no insurance for its crews and why they were offering people who had a negligible understanding of their rights relatively small sums of money—some as low as twenty thousand dollars—to sign papers that would release Windjammer from any future liability.

The Death on the High Seas Act (DOHSA), a United States federal law, requires a shipowner to compensate a dead crewman's family for wages he would have earned had he worked a normal life. Although Windjammer did want to give the families something to live on, it apparently believed that by acting quickly it could avoid more negative publicity and a costly settlement. (The company also wanted to limit its losses; the Fantome, which was valued at fifteen million dollars, was not insured.) The strategy backfired when lawyers and investigators showed up, telling the bereaved families that they could win damage awards of a million dollars apiece.

After the Fantome went down, Huggett & Scornavacca, a personal-injury law firm, went on Caribbean TV to advertise its services. The Miami firm, which specializes in maritime accidents and whose clients are mostly sailors from the Third World, does not have a particularly good reputation among defendants. William Huggett and his associates have been cited for soliciting clients in hospital rooms. There are judges in Dade County who refuse to hear cases that involve Huggett in any way. Snapshots of Huggett with smiling seamen and their compensation checks, along with photos of sinking and burning ships, line a wall in the waiting room of the firm's offices.

William Huggett himself is a fit and boyish-looking man of fifty. Before going to law school, he served in Vietnam as a lieutenant in the Marines and afterward wrote a novel based on his experiences there. Cruise-ship workers, he told me, are the "modern-day coal miners of the eighteen-nineties." We were talking in his office, whose emptiness is accentuated by a wall-sized plate-glass window overlooking the Dade County courthouse. "Windjammer's done such a bad thing," he went on. "It would be a

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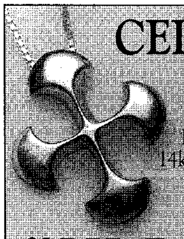

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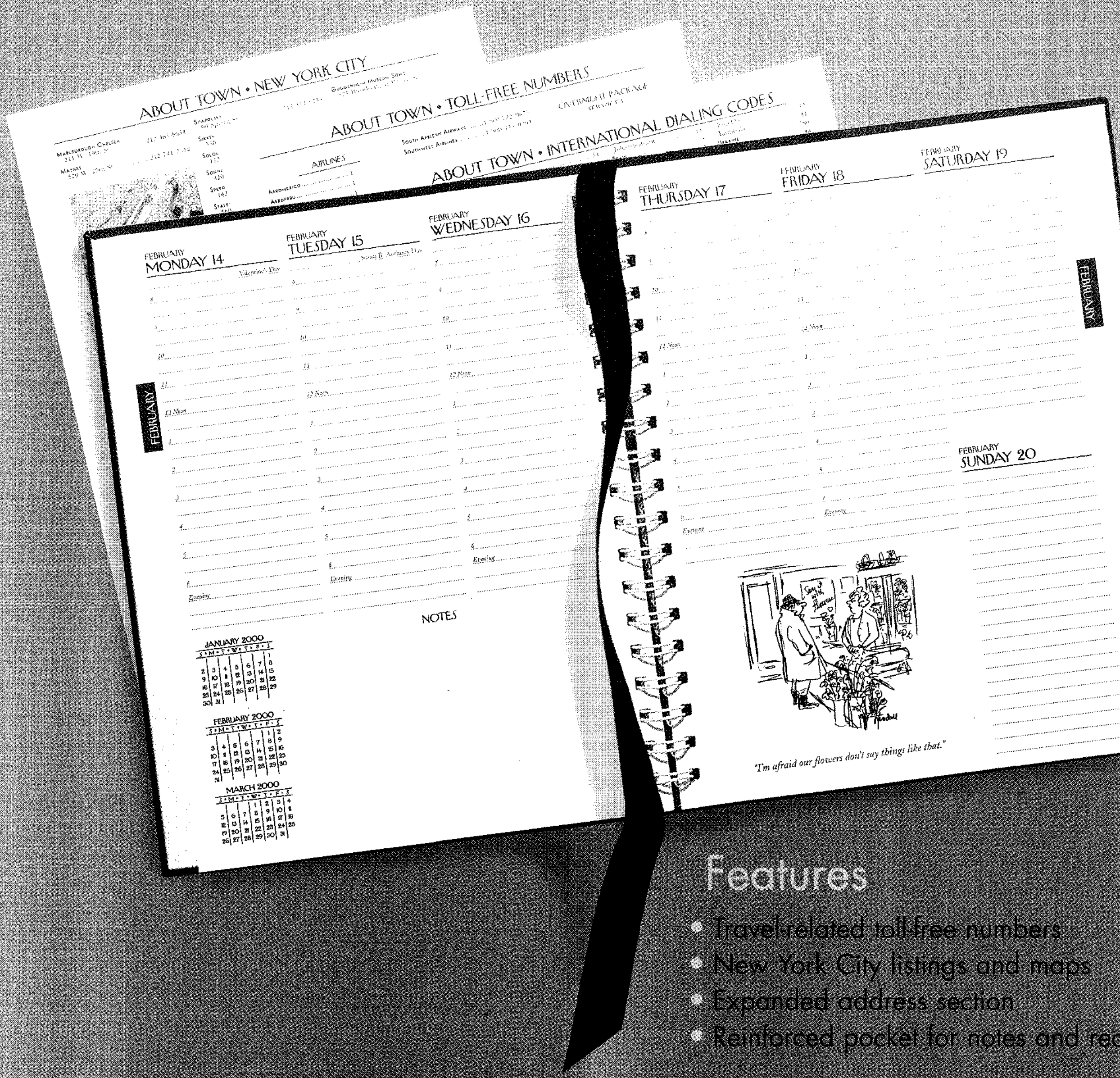
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pleasure to expose them to the public, but I don't think it's going to happen." Huggett doesn't like DOHSA, because it allows only for lost wages; he would like to see it expanded to include pain, suffering, and loss of companionship. "I can't use this case to change the law," he said, "because I can't see Congress caring enough. . . . But, if this was thirty-one American seamen, the law would be changed in a minute."

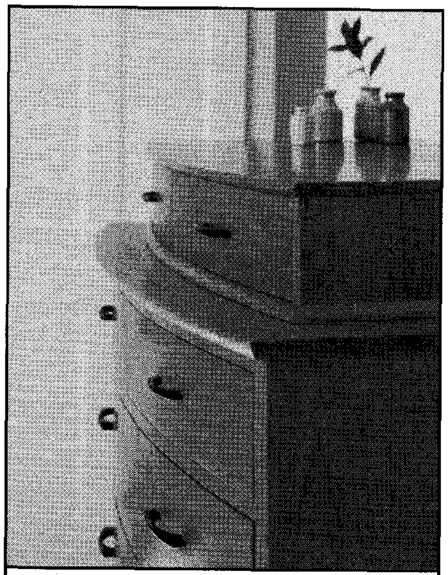
As it happened, there were no Americans aboard the Fantome when she went down, and only two white men: Guyan March and Chief Engineer Bucur; in all, the Fantome's crew represented eleven countries. A typical Windjammer deckhand comes from a place like Jamaica, St. Lucia, or Guyana, where unemployment is rampant and opportunities are few. He is on the ship for ten or more months a year and earns about three hundred dollars a month, plus tips. This is better money than he can make elsewhere in the islands, and it is enough to support his family.

The issue of nationality—the company's as well as the crew's—is crucial, because it determines where a case can be heard. Windjammer's ships are registered in Equatorial Guinea; such Third World flags of convenience are common in the cruise-ship industry, because these countries don't tax shipowners very heavily, if at all. What's more, each Windjammer ship is owned by an independent corporation based in Panama. By dividing and subdividing ownership and responsibility for its vessels in this way, a cruise line creates legal fire walls that can help limit liability. It also makes possible the life style Windjammer affords its passengers and its owner.

I TELEPHONED Captain Burke six weeks after the Fantome went down. When I told him that I wanted to talk to him about the Fantome, he said, cryptically, "I'm feeling some affinity for King Arthur. You're not a Lancelot, are you?" Burke was apparently looking for an ally—someone who would tell the world that it was Mitch, and not Windjammer, that had killed those men. I assured him I wasn't a Lancelot, but I wanted to learn how a big ship could be allowed to sink in such a well-announced storm. Apparently satisfied, Burke invited me to come to Miami for the weekend. If there was enough wind, he said, perhaps we would go for a sail on his ninety-two-foot yacht, Tondeleyo, a Polynesian name he translated as "white whore."

A few weeks after that conversation, I went to see Captain Burke. Although his children work for the company, it is the Captain's fantasies and ambitions that Windjammer embodies and supports. It seems appropriate that Burke—Big Daddy, as he is sometimes called—lives in a castle, a walled and moated attempt at medievalism whose squat towers and gargoyled crenellations are defiantly out of place among the Art Deco pastels of Miami Beach. The Captain designed the castle himself, and it is a remarkable combination of Disneyesque grandiosity and homespun in-

"Could you not call me Ray this time?"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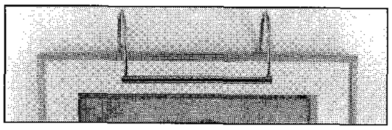
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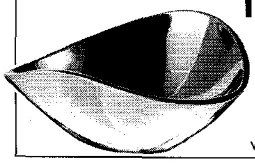
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vention which reflects Burke's interior mythology as vividly as "The Gates of Hell" reflects Rodin's. In the great hall is a sword in a stone. Just past the servants' quarters, from the mouth of a skull, saltwater gushes on its way into the moat, which is presided over by a life-size bronze statue of Neptune and patrolled by twenty-two live sharks.

Burke lives there with a Jamaican manservant, Gladstone, and a St. Vincentian cabinetmaker named Albert. He is visited regularly by a Salvadoran maid-of-all-work, various masseuses and masseurs, his broker, and members of his family, including his wife, June, from whom he has amicably separated. The Captain is a large, densely packed man with a rugged face, a hard, straight mouth, and tight gray curly hair. I saw traces of a seaman's vitality (he has sailed around the world five times), but he also appeared tired and sad. As it turned out, I arrived in the midst of a surprise fortieth-birthday party for one of Burke's daughters, Susan, the president of Windjammer's cruise business. "You were probably expecting a funeral, not a party," the Captain said when I was introduced to him by a newly hired publicist.

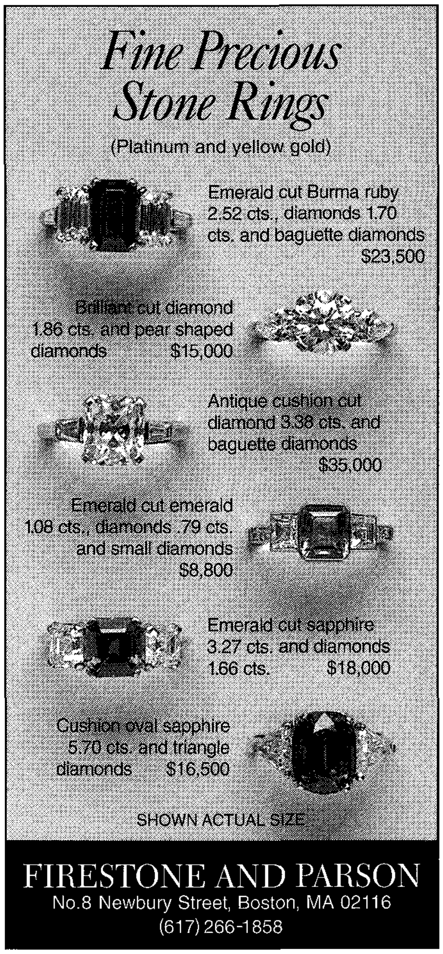
The son of a kosher butcher and a housewife, Burke was born in 1924, three years before the Fantome was launched. He grew up during the Depression near Asbury Park, New Jersey, and he spent much of the Second World War in submarines. After he was mustered out, Burke went to the Bahamas, where he found his calling while salvaging a nineteen-foot sloop. He named the vessel Hangover and sailed her to Miami. He repeated this procedure with progressively bigger vessels until he had assembled the largest privately owned fleet of tall ships in the world. Burke did for mega-yachting what Ford did for the automobile: he democratized it, bringing a previously inaccessible life style within range of the middle class. Windjammer, which also runs a small freight operation, grosses roughly twenty-five million dollars a year.

Captain Burke's office lies behind a door opened by a ship's wheel that operates like the bolt-throw mechanism on a bank vault. His desk is fashioned from a hundred-and-fifty-gallon fish tank that no longer holds fish. As we ate submarine sandwiches, Burke recalled how, once upon a time, he could handle a seventy-two-foot schooner single-handed. Before a couple of strokes grounded him recently, he also flew an amphibious Grumman Goose, buzzing his fleet as it sailed below. "I had five ships then," he says. "Columbus had only three. I used to race them. I was in my glory; I had more fun than God." He slumped back in his chair. "God, I miss those days." And then, barely audibly, almost to himself, he said, "It's terrible I became a fucking businessman. I feel betrayed. After all these years, God let me down."

The following evening in his pool, surrounded by a menagerie of concrete mermaids and sea monsters, Burke told me, "I'm the mother and the father of these ships. Losing the Fantome was like losing a child." Presiding over his private lagoon, with a South Florida sunset flaming behind him across Biscayne Bay, Burke seemed an aging Neptune, unsure if he had the strength, or the heart, to replace what he'd lost. But the moment passed quickly, and he got to the bottom line. "If it wasn't for this lawsuit," he said, "all the money we're spending on lawyers' fees could be going to the families."

WINDJAMMER has long been held in dubious regard by the East Coast's professional sailing community, members of which describe the fleet as haphazardly renovated and poorly maintained. "People in the professional sailing world just cringe at the thought of those vessels out there," Captain Andy Chase, a professor of marine transportation at Maine Maritime Academy, in Castine, told me. Chase represents a relatively recent change in attitude toward ships and risk. "I think going to sea at all costs is an outmoded tactic," he said. "Human life is worth more now than it was fifty years ago."

Yet this view still runs counter to many captains' instincts and training. Captain Burke's son claims that a captain makes the decisions about handling the ship, but Guyan was well aware that for a captain, particularly a young one, to lose his ship and live to tell about it is one of the surest ways to end a sailing career. Guyan March was doubly trapped—first, by a bicentennial storm in a geographic cul-de-sac, and, second, by a nineteenth-century conundrum. "You commit to the sea, and so to the ship," explains Windjammer's Captain Carmichael. "The captain *is* the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ship. This may sound a little sick, but a hurricane is a glorious way to go.”

Michael D. Burke insists that the decision to go to sea was not made by using nineteenth-century criteria—by weighing the lives of a mostly Third World crew against the prodigious cost of losing the Fantome. But in monetary terms the lives of the thirty-one men who died trying to save the Fantome will probably be worth only a fraction of what it will cost to replace her. William Huggett insists that this was the motive for keeping the Fantome at sea in the face of a Category 5 hurricane, and his success will depend on whether he can prove that Windjammer acted in a negligent fashion by sending the ship on what he calls a “suicide mission” motivated by “corporate greed.”

Andy Chase has spent weeks trying to understand Captain March’s last days. “I think his decisions degenerated sequentially,” Chase concluded. “Seeking a northern escape route makes no sense in a northwestbound hurricane, and hiding in the lee of Roatán wasn’t sustainable.” Inspired by Guyan’s dilemma, Chase is preparing a paper that revives an old formula for safely anticipating erratic hurricane behavior (a formula that, had it been applied to Mitch, would have indicated, days in advance, that the Fantome had no safe escape route in the Gulf of Honduras). He will present it to the American and International Sail Training Associations’ Safety Forum, when it meets in Boston this November.

Despite Mitch’s size and ferocity, the Fantome was the only ship lost in the gulf; all other ships of similar size had fled the area by October 26th. Michael D. Burke, who had access to better weather information than Captain Guyan did, was relying heavily on an extended forecast predicting a northwesterly course for Mitch. He has been besieged by grieving family members, lawyers, and the media. “My competence is in question,” he said, moments after I sat down in his cramped office. “For the forty-eight hours prior, I considered everything—all the options.” His voice rose. “I didn’t fuck up.” Michael was the youngest skipper in the history of Windjammer, commanding his first ship at age twenty. He is smaller than his father, but when I looked at him I was reminded of the sadness in his father’s eyes. I asked him why Windjammer tried to pay the crew’s families so little.

“I’ve been demonized in the media by Mr. Huggett,” he replied. “We have to remember that we are victims here also. Especially from Captain Burke’s perspective, this was an act of God: ‘We didn’t do anything wrong, so why is it that we have to pay more?’ There’s a question of whether or not DOHSA even applies. That’s going to be a battle that we’ll go through with Huggett for the next two years: whether or not U.S. law is even applicable here. It’s probably a very uphill battle for us. At the end of the day, DOHSA probabl*y does* apply.”

When he talked about what had happened to the Fantome and her crew, his tone changed. “They were working for Windjammer, and they died under our supervision. That’s the bottom line for me, anyway.” He paused for a moment. “I’m not the owner of this company,” he added. “I don’t make the final decisions. Captain Burke was in denial. He keeps going back to ‘What about me? I’m the one that’s hurt. It’s the Hurricane Center’s fault for having a bad forecast.’ Besides, there’s survival involved. If it was as easy as getting this out of our lives for three million bucks”—a rough estimate of the compensation, based on DOHSA guidelines—“we would do it. This has been very disruptive. I would love to get it behind us.”

As a result of pressure from Huggett, and from inside Windjammer as well, DOHSA has now become the reference point for the company’s settlement package, a considerable step up from its initial offers. Michael D. Burke says, “Ideally, we’d like to settle with all the families, but there will probably be some who hold out for a trial.” He has been travelling to the islands to negotiate with the families; so far, fourteen families have settled out of court, but it will take years for them to receive all the money. Of the remaining number, ten have committed to Huggett, and the rest have retained separate counsel. Those who decide to sue are gambling on Huggett’s success and won’t see a verdict or a settlement for quite some time. For some, it is worth the wait. Cansantine Hardware is a Jamaican who once worked for Windjammer; his son, O’Ryan, had been working for Windjammer for only a year. “I don’t care about the money,” Cansantine told me. “The money won’t bring back my boy. I want justice.” One parent said flatly, “I would like to crucify Mike Burke—for my son.”

Meanwhile, the families who have agreed to settle are being promised awards of between seventy-five thousand and a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, depending on the number of children and the crewman’s pay scale. This is a paltry sum by American standards, but immense for most of the families involved.

DURING our last meal together, seated at a table in the castle, the Captain told me of an image that comes to him at night. “I’m in the saloon of the Fantome,” he said. “She’s going down, and I’m trapped inside.” The most chilling detail is not the screams of the men around him, or the certainty of death, or the crushing sense of powerlessness. It is that he is alone.

On December 12, 1998, there was a memorial service for the crew, held at Quarantine Point, on the island of Grenada. All the families of the crew were invited, and many came—at Windjammer’s expense. Burke was absent; he had sent his children as his proxies. When I watched a videotape of the service, I saw his daughter Susan, a slender, fine-boned woman, and Michael, sitting in the sweltering heat while, all around them, the mothers of Caribbean sons wailed with abandon. After the ceremony (Burke had asked that a favorite passage of his, from Kipling’s “Captains Courageous,” be read at the service), the mourners walked out to the end of Quarantine Point, a long, narrow finger of land pointing westward off Grenada’s southern coast. Each person held a rose, preparing to throw it into the sea. When that was done, they turned and walked inland, but Annie Bleasdale, who had been Guyan March’s fiancée, waited. “I couldn’t bear to throw my rose,” she told me. “When I finally did, the water suddenly became alive with fish—jumping and dancing on the water for as far as the eye could see. I wasn’t the only one who saw it. There were others there, too. The locals said they’d never seen anything like it. I remember somebody saying, ‘It’s them.’ ” ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Sudbury (Mass.) Town Crier*]

1:58 a.m. A Hudson Road resident reported a strange man in her bed, but then realized it was her husband.

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

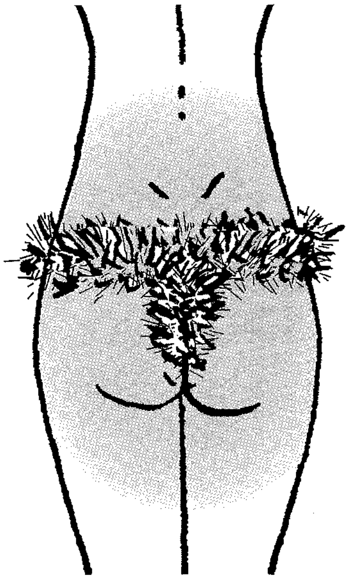
DISGRUNTLED FORMER LEXICOGRAPHER

BY STEVE MARTIN

THE following definition was discovered in the 1999 edition of the Random House dictionary. The crafting of this definition was the final assignment of Mr. Del Delhuey, who had been dismissed after thirty-two years with the company.

mut•ton (mut′n), *n.* [Middle English, from Old French *mouton*, *moton*, from Medieval Latin *multo*, *multon-*, of Celtic origin.]

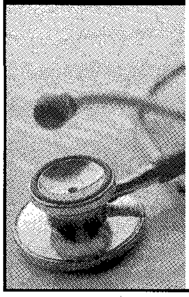
1. The flesh of fully grown sheep. **2.** A glove with four fingers. **3.** Two discharged muons. **4.** Seven English tons. **5.** One who mutinies. **6.** To wear a dog. **7.** A fastening device on a mshirt or a mblouse. **8.** Fuzzy underwear for ladies. **9.** A bacteria-resistant amoeba with an attractive do. **10.** To throw a boomerang weakly. **11.** Any kind of lump in the pants. (*Slang*.) **12.** A hundred mittens. **13.** An earthling who has been taken over by an alien. **14.** The smallest whole particle in the universe, so small you can hardly see it. **15.** A big, nasty cut on the hand. **16.** The rantings of a flibbertigibbet. **17.** My wife never supported me. **18.** It was as though I worked my whole life and it wasn't enough for her. **19.** My children think I'm a nerd. **20.** In architecture, a bad idea. **21.** Define this, you nitwits. **22.** To blubber one's finger over the lips while saying "bluh." **23.** I would like to take a trip to the seaside, where no one knows me. **24.** I would like to be walking along the beach when a beautiful woman passes by. **25.** She would stop me and ask me what I did for a living. **26.** I would tell her I am a lexicographer. **27.** She would say, "Oh, you wild boy." Exactly that, not one word different. **28.** Then she would ask me to define our relationship, which at that point would be one minute old. I would demur. But she would say, "Oh, please define this second for me right now." **29.** I would look at her and say, "Mutton." **30.** She would swoon. Because I would say it with a slight Spanish accent, at which I am very good. **31.** I would take her hand and she would notice me feeling her wedding ring. I would ask her whom she is married to. She would say, "A big cheese at Random House." **32.** I would take her to my hotel room, and teach her the meaning of love. **33.** I would use the American Heritage, out of spite, and read all the definitions. **34.** Then I would read from the Random House some of my favorites among those that I worked on: "the" (just try it); "blue" (give it a shot, and don't use the word "nanometer"). **35.** I would make love to her according to the O.E.D., sixth definition. **36.** We would call room service and order tagliolini without looking it up. **37.** I would return her to the beach, and we would say goodbye. **38.** Gibberish in E-mail. **39.** A reading lamp with a lousy fifteen-watt bulb, like they have in Europe.



mutton 8

Also: **a. muttonchops**: slicing sheep meat with the face. **b. muttsam**: sheep floating in the sea. **c. muttonheads**: the Random House people. ♦

ISTVAN BANYAI



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ANNALS OF POP

MARY'S WORLD

A former Public Enemy follows the career of the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul.

BY SISTER SOULJAH

THERE'S this white guy who used to be my driver. He would pick me up at my apartment, at 123rd Street and Malcolm X Boulevard in Harlem, and carry me into the music-business world of midtown Manhattan. It was 1991. I had recently served as the female voice of Public Enemy, the political black-nationalist hip-hop band, and now I was finishing up my first solo CD for Epic Records. The white people I usually encountered were power brokers and decision makers who could take a girl like me, package her talent, and offer her a seat on top of the world—or dismiss her into the valley of obscurity. So this chauffeur was just about the only working-class white guy I could claim to know.

Most of the time, I liked to ride in silence. But one night the driver interrupted my thoughts to ask, "Do you know Mary?"

"No," I answered dryly.

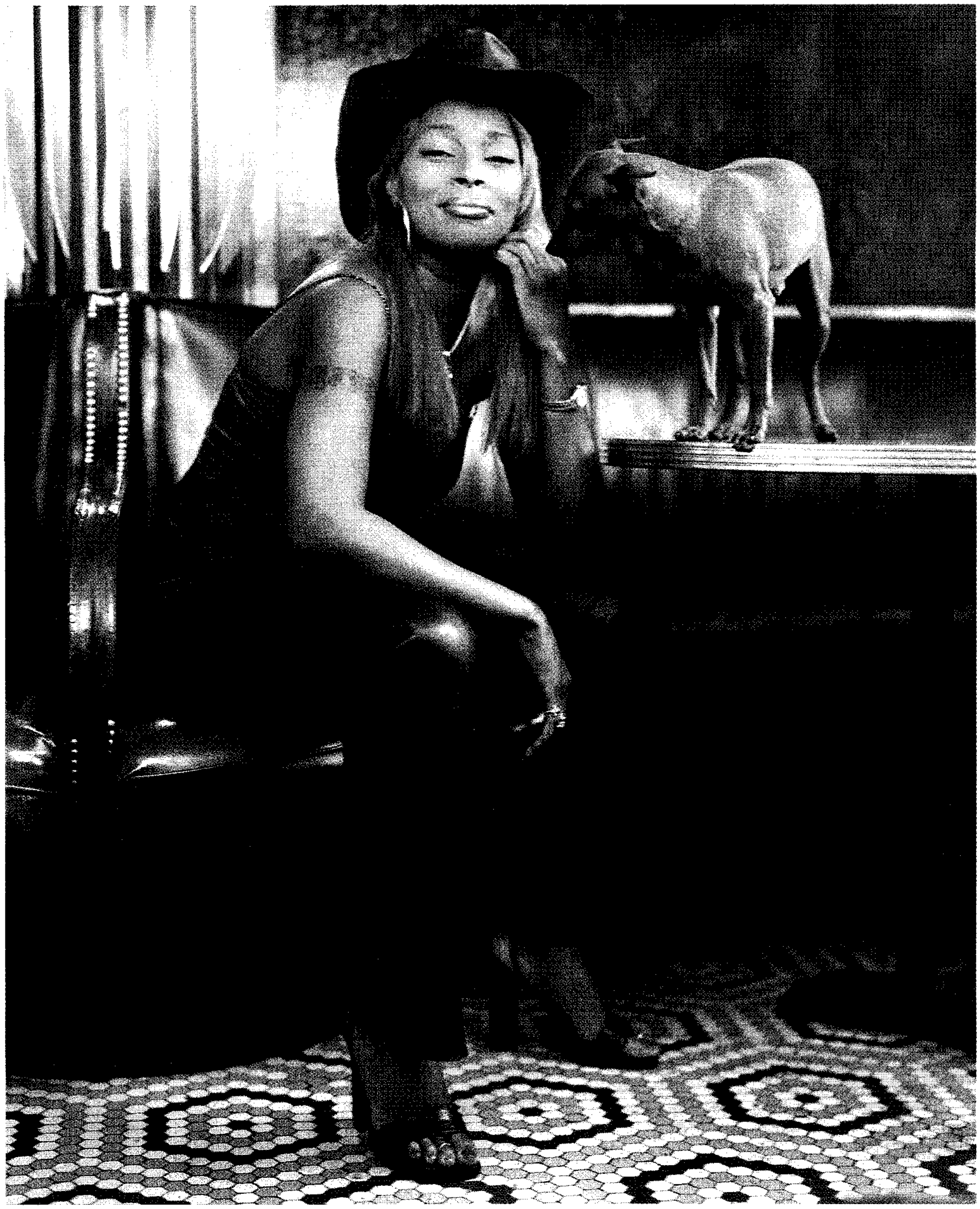
"I'm surprised," he said. "Mary J. Blige is going to be a big star. I drive for her, too. The other night, she let me hear one of her songs when I took her home from the studio. Her music is great. But what I like most is that she's really nice—just a nice person. In my world that matters. I meet a lot of nasty people." He glanced at me in the rearview mirror and I smiled politely, not wanting to be tossed into the "nasty" pit.

Not long afterward, I went to the Impact Conference in Atlantic City—an annual gathering of musicians and music-industry heads—and ran into a group of young black men wearing T-shirts that read "Mary J. Blige—The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul." Damn, that's a big title to give anyone, I thought, but it didn't mean that much to me.

Sean (Puffy) Combs in a Mary J. Blige T-shirt—that meant something to me. He was the director of A. & R. at Uptown Records then, but I had known him since he was a student at Howard University. While other students had become activists or jockeyed for positions in sororities and fraternities, Puffy had emerged as a promoter who could pull in the top stars of the moment—from Heavy D. or Doug E. Fresh to Public Enemy. He had quickly earned a reputation as someone who always knew who was hot and who was not.

"We're showcasing Mary today, Souljah," he told me with a smile and a certain confidence. "Stop through and check her out." I was surprised, honestly, to see him and Uptown's street team so enthusiastic about a young woman's talent. I had never seen guys, popular guys, so united and solid around a female performer—not MC Lyte, or Queen Latifah, or any young sister, for that matter. Even the man who was my date at Impact—and who later became my husband—was excited about the showcase, where Mary J. Blige would receive her formal introduction to the industry. So, in the spirit of a true ghetto girl who'd rather have the attention for herself, I persuaded him to skip it with me.

IT didn't matter that I had forfeited that chance to hear Mary J. Blige. Weeks later, her voice shot across the country with the release of the single "You Remind Me," from the soundtrack of the movie "Strictly Business." The song combined R. & B. with unrelenting hip-hop, heavy beats with the clean, clear, sincere voice of Mary J. Blige—marrying two forms of music that had had a notoriously hostile relationship for years—at a level of innovation that no one had seen since Teddy Riley introduced new jack swing. It became a huge underground hit. Blige was only twenty years old at the time and she brought something fresh and soft into



"Long ago, it was easy to do the wrong thing," Blige says. "Now I know how friendly to be." Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

SABA

an arena that had been dominated by competing hardcore male m.c.s. Hip-hop audiences had grown used to the gangster tales of the rap group Niggaz Wit' Attitude (N.W.A.), whose hit "Fuck tha Police" went multi-platinum. They had been politicized by the revolutionary and ultra-masculine rhymes of Chuck D in Public Enemy. And no hip-hop audience had missed the merciless and skillful rhymes of Ice-Cube, then affiliated with the Nation of Islam, who put out the explosive hit "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted." Mary J. Blige addressed the same audience, and it embraced her, her music, her lyrics.

It soon came to my attention through industry chitchat that this girl was "the real thing." She had been born in the Bronx, in 1971, and grew up in the housing projects of Yonkers. Before hip-hop, living in the projects had been a source of shame. But now it was a litmus test, a testament to legitimacy, a badge of honor, even. The project Mary lived in was called Slow Bomb, and she sang like she came from there—like she knew it was either make this song work for her or share the fate of hundreds of youths whose bios all read the same: ghettos, single parents, poverty, frustration, poor education, loneliness, and, ultimately, so-called self-destruction.

As a girl, Blige sang in school talent shows and sometimes in the church her mother required her to attend. Then, as a teen-ager, she recorded a cover of Anita Baker's "Caught Up in the Rapture," in a karaoke booth at a local mall, not expecting to do anything with it. But her mother's boyfriend handed the tape to a friend, Jeff Redd, who was

POSTLUDE

How can you go to the cemetery
Sunday after Sunday, and not believe in God.

How can you bring flowers, Sunday after Sunday,
to the grave of your mother, the grave of your father,

Sunday after Sunday, and not believe in God.
And clear away a stray leaf, or water the harsh earth,

or freshen the burnt grass, or shovel up
the raw snow, or make the sign of the cross,

and beg forgiveness of the past, the shadow of tomorrow.
How can you do it, do all of that, Sunday after Sunday,

in the name of love and the hereafter,
though still, deep in your heart, still not believe in God.

—Robert Mazzocco

then an artist on the Uptown Records roster. Redd passed it to an executive at Uptown, who called Blige in and offered her the recording deal that would change her life.

In early 1992, I was sitting in a car with the same white driver when the first single from Mary J. Blige's début album, "What's the 411?," hit the airwaves. "Real Love" silenced the skeptics who'd thought Blige a one-hit wonder. The lyrics were sensitive and soulful, yet her voice was powerful—it rode on top of, behind, beside, and under the beats of Audio Two's "Top Billin'."

Like many ghetto girls who battle for the love of the few surviving available, sane black men, I wanted to see what Mary J. Blige looked like. Given the tremendous influence of hip-hop in the black community, I knew that we would all be compared with her. So I surfed Video Music Box, BET, and MTV looking for the "Real Love" video. When it finally premièred, my apprehensions were confirmed. Mary was beautiful. She was big-boned yet shapely, with a classic round African behind, a small waist, and comfortable wide hips. As I looked at her tight pants and her combat boots, I thought, Hey, that's me. That's all of us. Mary reps for us, and she's making us all look good.

While I was battling my own Presidential-size political problems in the potent Public Enemy era of the early nineties, I heard Mary's voice cutting through it all, singing about love, loss, and abuse. She was surprisingly unafraid to link herself to the powerless position of a woman led by emotion and then washed away by betrayal. Even the songs she chose to cover—Rose Royce's "I'm Goin' Down" and Chaka Khan's "Sweet Thing"—told stories of women who were faithful to careless, callous, or sometimes sadistic men. The issues she sang about carried a lot of weight in African-American communities, where, unless we rediscovered love and family, we stood to lose many of the gains of the civil-rights movement.

Mary J. Blige was not a revolutionary. She was not a Harriet Tubman or an Angela Davis. But, over the next six years and four albums, she did what many other divas had failed to do. She found success in the music business without "biting," or imitating anyone else's style. She kept her rough voice; she exposed her own vulnerable heart; she pronounced her words in unashamed black English and she danced her unchoreographed, unladylike steps with class. Urban kids elevated Blige for "keeping it real." When she didn't want

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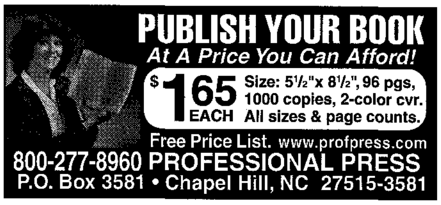
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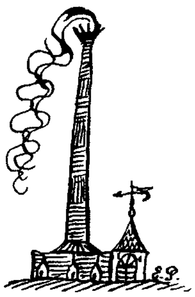
THE DIGITAL RESURRECTION

to see people, she said so. When she wasn't in the mood to talk, she told you to back up out of her face. For this frankness, she was sometimes accused of having a bad attitude. The press labelled her "difficult," dogged her for showing up late to interviews, cussing like a sailor, or offering bold responses to their questions. But magazine and newspaper stories about Mary J. Blige getting kicked out of her mother's apartment when she was fifteen, dropping out of school, and experimenting with alcohol and drugs did not diminish her audience. They only broadened it. The essence of hip-hop is, after all, to express through rhyme and music the realities of youth in America.

THESE days, after a long line of poor managers and questionable deals and a difficult and abusive long-term relationship, Blige has come into her own. She has gradually detached herself from the talented yet parasitic partners she chose early in her career. She has also separated her business from Puffy Combs and is standing alone, musically and financially. She has done this at a price. Her fan base is huge, but she no longer has the marketing excitement that comes with an affiliation with the ringmaster Combs. Still, Blige has grown tremendously with each album. Her fifth and latest, released last month and entitled simply "Mary," features duets with Aretha Franklin, Elton John, Eric Clapton, and Lauryn Hill. It also includes a duet with K-Ci, formerly of the group Jodeci, who was Mary's lover for nearly three years and rumored to be the source of much of the storm in her life.



Blige and I crossed paths briefly on a few occasions after I first missed her at Impact, but each time I was afforded only a glimpse. Finally, in the heat wave of last July, I spent some time with the "Queen of Hip-Hop Soul" at a restaurant in midtown Manhattan. My husband was with me, ostensibly to record the conversation, but we both knew the real reason he was there—millions of men in America would kill to sit at the same table as Blige. Her hair was earth-red, her skin milk-chocolate brown. She was the star, yet she was the one who was nervous. Her perfectly manicured nails fumbled with the menu. She was guarded, but very openly aware—perhaps too aware—of her own imperfections.

"I got to know myself a lot better," she said of her eight-year career. "I accept the things that I thought were so ugly and not right. I accept the way I speak. I accept not finishing high school. I accept a lot."

I questioned her use of the word "ugly," which seemed incompatible with the woman in front of me.

"It's a private world behind closed doors that I really don't like to talk about but I sing about," she said. "It comes from the mouths of those people who are close to you who are supposed to love you." Press Blige to name names and she won't. This is the code of the projects: you don't discuss the specifics with strangers. Whatever you say may be used against you. Blige admitted to the excesses, drugs, and alcohol abuse of the past, but she didn't elaborate, saying simply, "My depression is over. My substance abuse is done." When I mentioned that many music reporters have likened her to the late Billie Holiday, she rejected the comparison immediately, thinking that people make it only because of Holiday's drug use. But if anything was clear from our conversation it was that Mary's victimization was over. "Long ago, it was easy to do the wrong thing," she told me. "Now I really know my limits. I know how friendly to be and who to be friendly with."

We spoke of favorite performers, and she cited Michael Jackson, who she said brought happiness into her childhood. I asked whether any people had seen her collaboration with Elton John as a crossover, and she dismissed the question. She recorded the song, she said, because when she was young her father had played Elton John at home and she dug it. "I wanted to invite Elton into Mary's world," she added forcefully. "In the studio he was comfortable with us."

What was the happiest moment in her career, I asked. We sat still for minutes. Finally, she said, "The day I realized I did not have to live for the music business. I mean, I'm in it, but not of it." ♦

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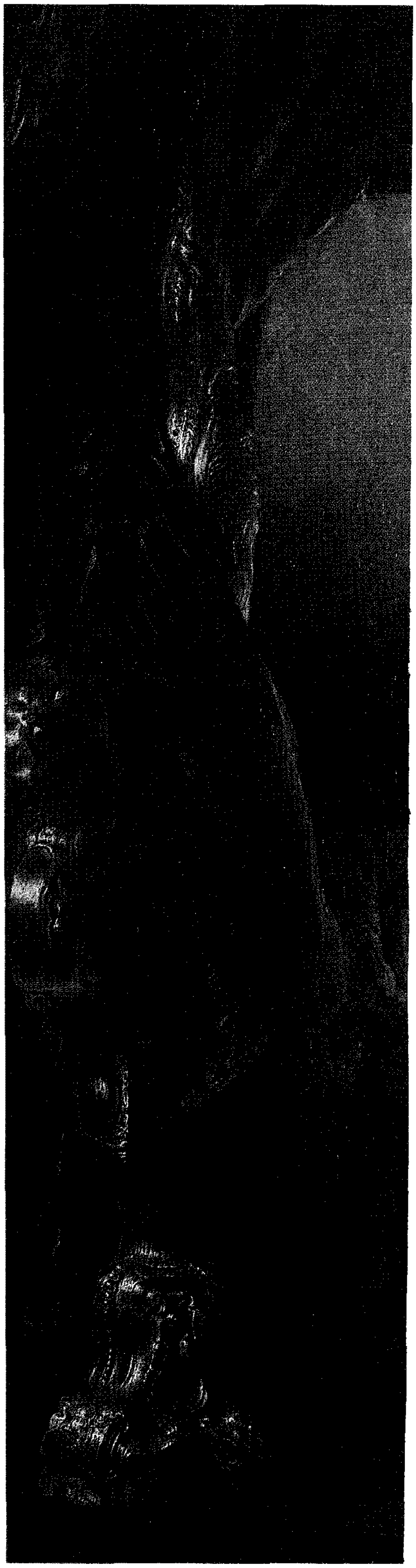
A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE NAKED REMBRANDT

Was he a man distracted by earthy delights, or a painter who knew exactly what he was looking at?

BY SIMON SCHAMA



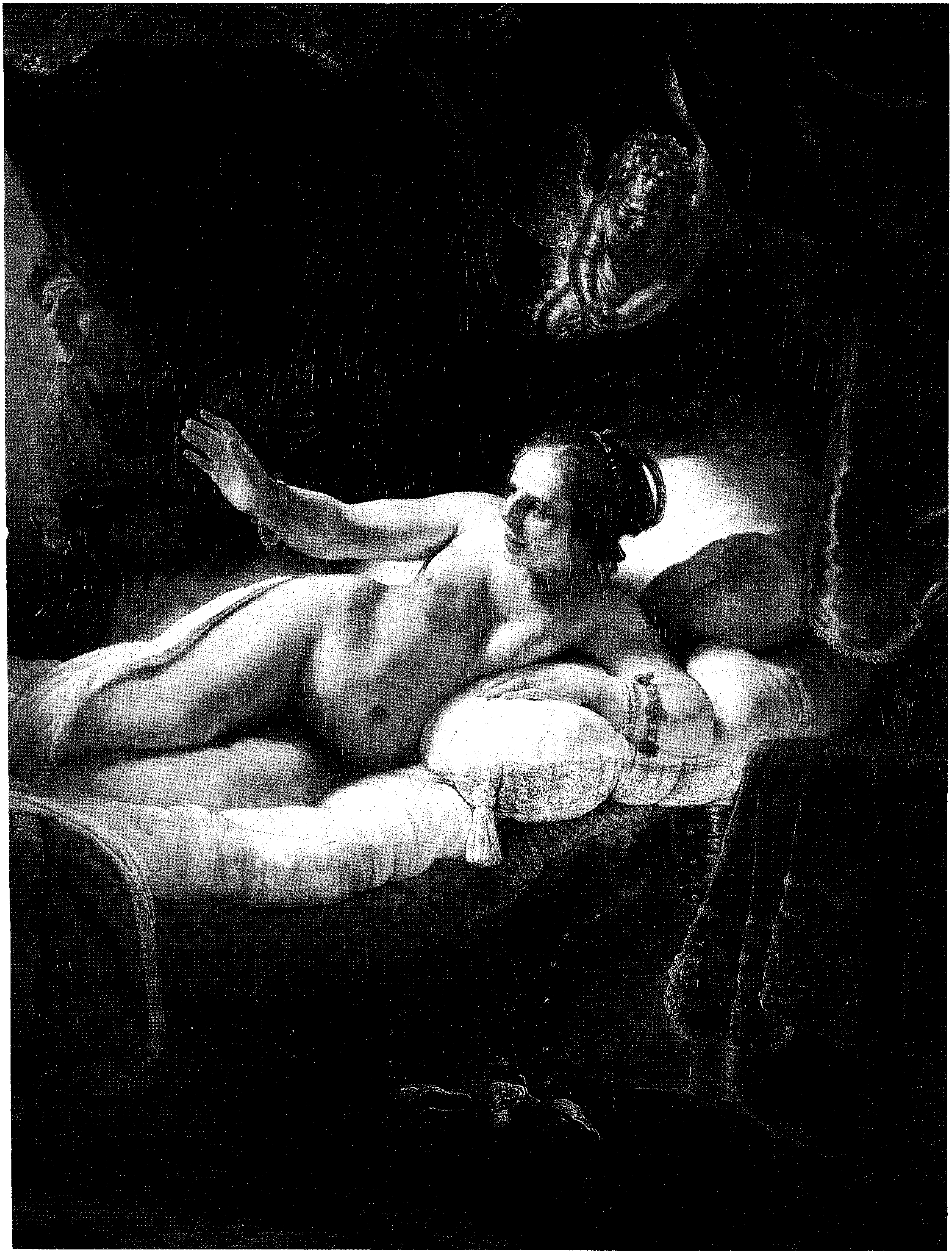
On June 15, 1985, with the white nights coming on fast in Leningrad (as it was then still known), a nondescript young Lithuanian walked into the long gallery devoted to Rembrandt van Rijn, on the second floor of the Hermitage museum. The first painting to greet him was the 1636 "Danae," the mythic figure stretched out on her bed, propped up on her left elbow, her skin bathed in golden light, her breasts, belly, and thighs turned hospitably to the beholder. The man walked up to the painting and stabbed the girl in the groin, slicing through the canvas and extending the tear a full twelve centimetres as he pulled the knife from the wound. He punctured her once more and then threw a bottle of sulfuric acid at her face, torso, and legs. This evacuation of hatred happened in just a few seconds, before the guards could get there.

Only a third of the total area of the painting was affected by the vandal's onslaught, but it was the critical central section, the body of the woman. It took twelve years for the anxious and still grieving restorers and curators to show the painting to the Russian public again. Immediately after the crime, Communist Party officials, lapsing into disinformation mode, wanted to conceal the extent of the disaster and ordered the painting to be fully restored. "The picture must not become a monument to barbarism," one official declared. "It must be returned to the museum's halls as an example of the progress of Soviet art restoration." The museum staff was less sanguine. The painting was no more capable of "integral restoration" than the U.S.S.R. itself; what was being demanded was a repainting so extensive that the canvas would, to all intents and purposes, cease to be a Rembrandt. The curators and restorers, instead of pretending that the damage had been slight, proposed something revolutionary: admitting the truth, and retouching only areas of the painting where the acid had not bitten clear through to the canvas.

The "Danae," even in its ravaged state, emits the intense sensuality that provoked the unhinged Lithuanian to his slash-and-splash attack. The picture's palpable earthiness had got it in trouble before. It had been bought by Catherine the Great, whose own well-developed erotic instincts presumably were much pleased by it. During the reign of her son, Tsar Paul, who cordially detested almost everything his mother represented, the painting was removed from the small, decorative Hermitage and taken to a darker gallery. The straitlaced reign of Nicholas I isolated it even further from ogling eyes, so that by the time the French critic Louis Viardot visited St. Petersburg in the mid-nineteenth century, what he described as the painting of "an indecent subject painted in a still more indecent manner" had been "relegated far from the crowds of visitors" to the depths of the palace. Subscribing to a long tradition of disgust at the forms of Rembrandt's nudes of the sixteen-thirties, Viardot asked, "Can one possibly conceive of the passion of the Master of the Gods"—Jupiter, that is—"for a creature so evidently unworthy to please?"

But why would Rembrandt, ten years after his emergence as an independent artist, and on the verge of recognition as the nonpareil of Dutch history painters—the next Rubens—go out of his way to create a repellent

The 1636 "Danae" once belonged to Catherine the Great, whose well-developed erotic instincts presumably were much pleased by it.



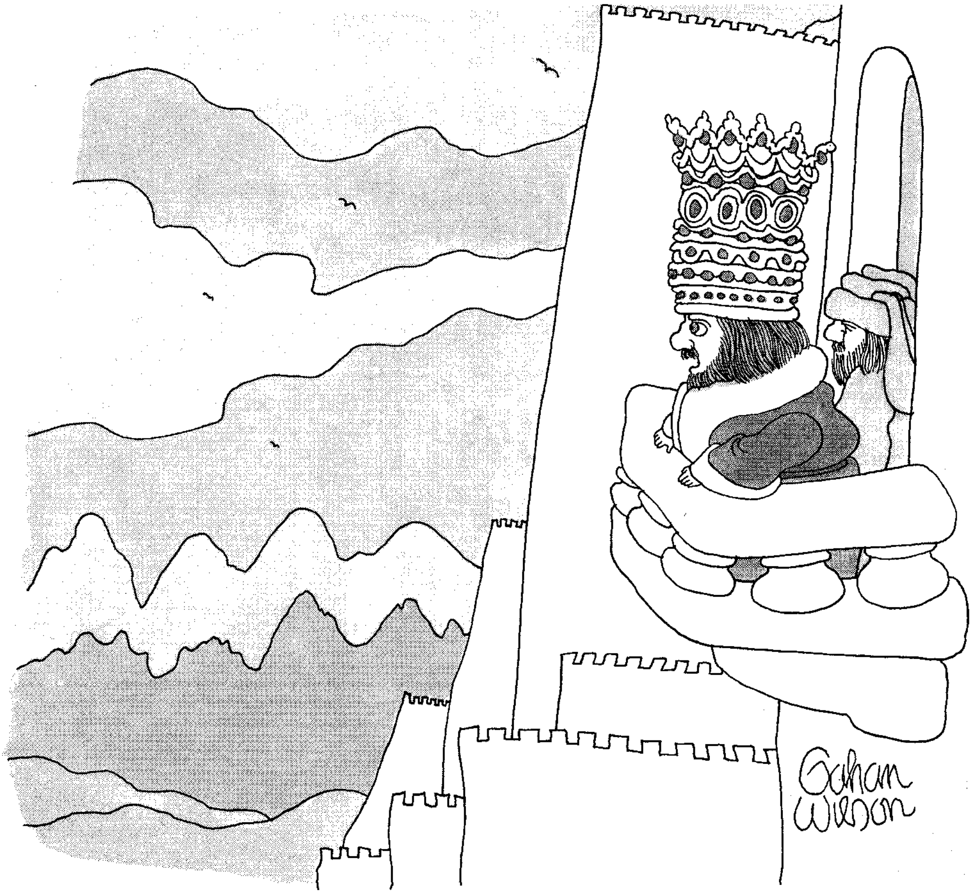
HERMITAGE, ST. PETERSBURG/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY nude? And why should the *subject* have been thought indecent? The story of Danae is taken principally from Horace, and turns on the Roman truism about the futility of self-protection against the decrees of fate. The King of Argos, Acrisius, incarcerated his only daughter, Danae, in a "brazen" tower, in the hope of avoiding the fulfillment of a prophecy that he would be killed by his own grandson. This was, of course, a risible challenge to Jupiter, who duly penetrated both the prison and the princess in the form of a rain of gold. Having a hard time crediting Danae's pregnancy to an eighteen-karat downpour, Acrisius decided to take no chances, and he shut Danae and the love child into a chest, which was then cast into the sea. Needless to say, both survived, and the infant grew up to become the hero Perseus, who, between more celebrated exploits, was casually throwing the discus one day when a fateful zephyr diverted its trajectory straight to the head of his grandfather Acrisius. Prophecy fulfilled.

The story had been irresistible to artists since antiquity. In Greek ceramics, Danae is often seen opening her dress to admit the golden rain, but in Pompeian painting she was nude, and the erotic charge emitted by her body became a standard feature of Renaissance painting. Rembrandt may have been following one of Titian's versions of the history when he augmented the material manifestation of Jupiter with a numinous golden light; indeed, his conversion of the actual shower into something more ethereal has led more pious-minded writers on Rembrandt to argue that his "Danae" was meant less as a love song than as a hymn—a deliberate throwback to a medieval tradition that made the chaste princess, inseminated by golden light, a prefiguration of the Virgin.

It's a pity that the Hermitage slasher did not have access to this erudition. Had he known that the painting embodied virtue, not vice, he might have spared himself the trouble and the rest of us the masterpiece. But then again he might have taken a second look and found the Christian interpretation a bit of a stretch. As Erwin Panofsky pointed out a long time ago, the tears of the chained Cupid who appears at one end of the bed can be understood to represent Danae's enforced chastity—the inability to consummate fleshly love—more easily than any regrets for its impending loss. To insist that Rembrandt's woman, lying warmly and heavily on her sheets, is a personification of the victory of platonic over sensual love is to ignore the most obvious fact of the painting: the uniquely earthy imprint of her body. His "Danae" is a memory bank of physical inspection: the dark line that stretches from navel to groin, the little beadlike nipples, the irregular teeth appearing above a slightly protruding lower lip are all details meant to lead us across the threshold from vision to touch. This woman is neither a coolly classical model (in the manner of Correggio) nor the poetically voluptuous torso of the Titians. She is something altogether more startling: an unidealized, flesh-and-blood contemporary woman. It was something very like this painting that Jan de Bisschop, one of Rembrandt's fiercest critics, had in mind when, in 1671, he attacked the painter for putting nature before the classical ideal, for painting "a Leda or a Danae . . . as a naked woman with swollen belly, hanging breasts and garter marks on the legs."

The critics who upbraided Rembrandt for spitting in the eye of classical decorum also had in mind two extraordinary etchings, known as "The Woman on the Mound" and "Diana at Her Bath," and published by Rembrandt in 1636, around the time he was completing the "Danae." Three centuries later, Kenneth Clark pronounced the prints "some of the most unpleasing, not to say disgusting, pictures ever produced by a great artist"; he thought that Rembrandt's devotion to recording in unflinching detail the folds, wrinkles, and sags of a woman's body could be explained only as a deliberate sabotaging of the classical ideal or as a clumsy attempt at ridicule.

Rembrandt was thus set off sharply from Rubens, who recommended the statuary of antiquity as the model for the nude. But *were* Rembrandt's nudes all that different from those of the master, and, especially, from the ample Ruben-



"Of course, it helped that my father was also a king."

sian bodies of the mid-sixteen-thirties, with their fleshy overspill and their associations of horticultural ripeness? There was no reason that the up-and-coming Rembrandt should have gone out of his way to make his nudes a calculated insult to good taste; he was working during this period on important commissions for the head of the Dutch Republic, the Stadholder Frederik Hendrik, and for the Stadholder's secretary, Constantijn Huygens, a pillar of classicism who had discovered the young painter in Leiden in 1629.

Rembrandt was, as usual, up to something. What he was up to, however, presupposes not the ugliness of his models, as critics assumed, but a quality that is hard even for our late-second-millennium culture, with its emphasis on airbrushed beauty, to grasp—namely, their desirability. Only if we can see these bodies as palpably desirable can we see them as vulnerably exposed, or, in a word, naked.

What evidently fascinated Rembrandt, alone among Baroque artists, was the quasi-nude—the imperfect conversion process by which live models were made over into mythological or Biblical figures. Instructional books on figure drawing all commanded, as Rubens did, the study of antique sculpture as a preliminary. But at some point—for Rembrandt, at least—stone-gazing had to be replaced by flesh-gazing. And he found the plump and rumpled women in his sights held his attention to the degree that they could *not* quite manage the transformation into Dianas or Venuses. This relaxation of the boundary of pictorial decorum—the separation between the fantasy within the painting and the reality outside it—was at the center of everything Rembrandt did, and it raised provocative questions: Is she a goddess or is she a girl with her clothes off? Is she a nude or is she naked? Does she belong to the ages or does she belong to me?

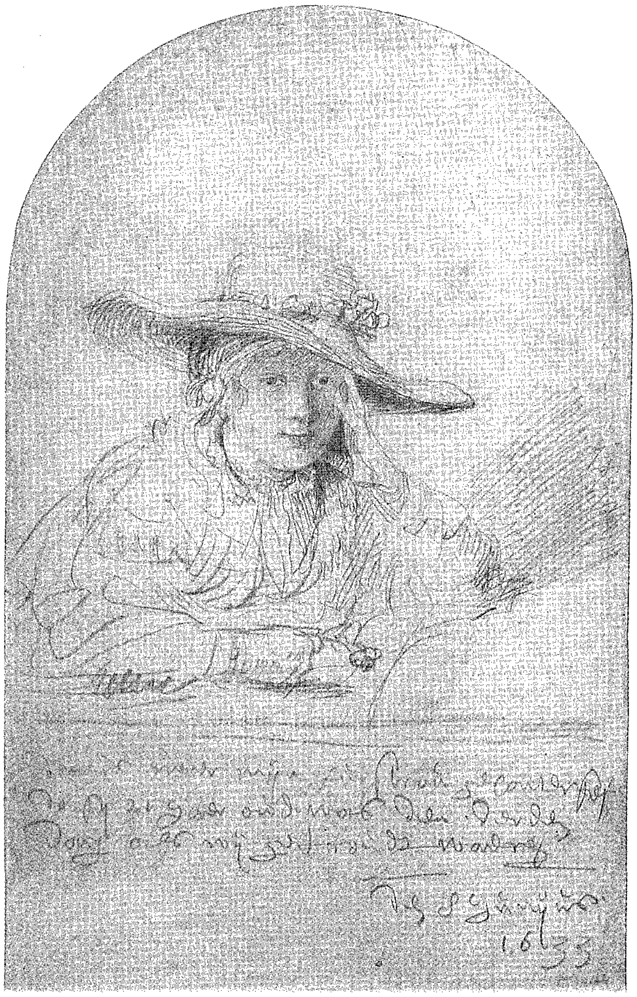
"Well, if you're not going to say anything could you please exude something?"

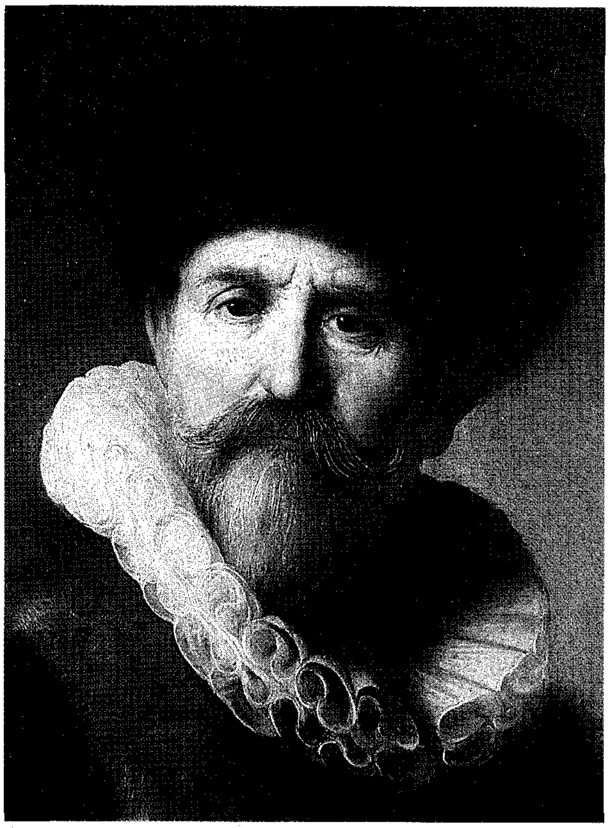
• •

FROM the beginning, Rembrandt was powerfully drawn to ruin, to the poetry of imperfection. He enjoyed tracing the marks left by the bite of worldly experience: the pits and pocks that gave the human countenance a mottled richness. Other than the Holy Scripture, he cared for no book as well as the book of decay, its truths written in the furrowed brows of old men and women; in the sagging timbers of decrepit barns; in the lichenous masonry of derelict buildings; in the mangy fur of a valetudinarian lion. He was a compulsive peeler, itching to open the casing of things and people, to winkle out the content packed within. He liked to toy with the poignant discrepancies between outsides and insides—the brittle husk and the vulnerable core.

The ninth of ten children born to a miller and his wife, probably in the year 1606, in Leiden, Rembrandt was the only one in his family to receive an education. (His brothers went into the trades—one was a miller, one a baker, one a shoemaker.) At the age of seven, he was sent off to the Latin School, where, while receiving a religious and classical education, he would have taken drawing lessons. Yet one can overcorrect the Romantics' mistake in supposing him to be a floury-haired autodidact. Unlike Rubens, he did not flourish the humanist's graces, dashing off lines of Latin verse and peppering his letters with citations from Virgil. In 1656, when his possessions were inventoried by the bankruptcy court, there were precious few books among them. What he acquired from his school days was a library in his head: a shelf of histories and Scriptures, full of pathos, shock, and atonement.

For all his inventiveness, however, the young artist whom Constantijn Huygens had discovered was driven constantly to measure himself against





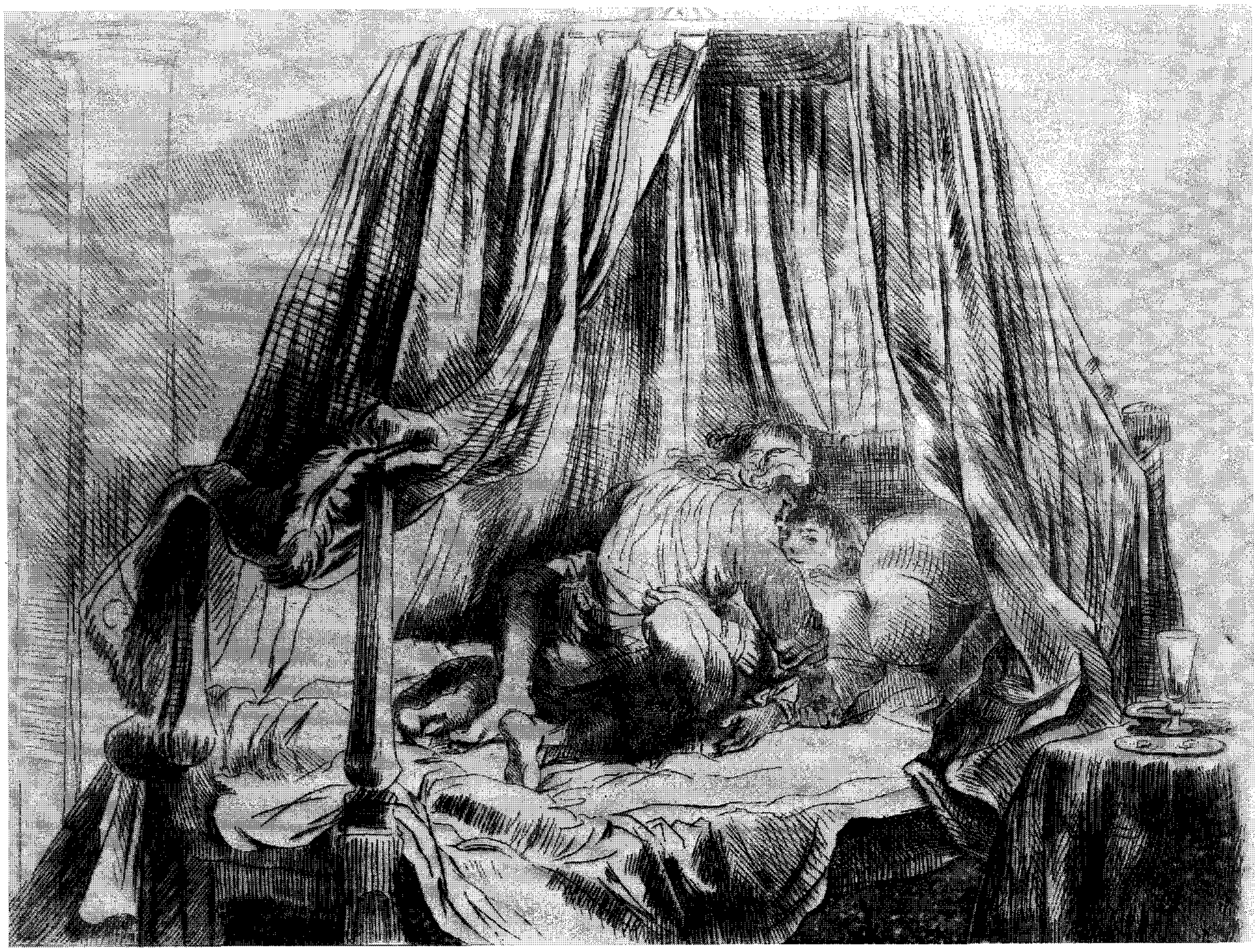
From left: the drawing Rembrandt made of Saskia after their betrothal; his first commissioned portrait, of Nicolaes Ruts; "The French Bed," an erotic print.

others: his Amsterdam teacher Pieter Lastman; his Leiden friend and rival Jan Lievens; and probably even the august array of Netherlandish masters canonized in a volume of biographies written by the painter and art theorist Karel van Mander. When Huygens began buying Rembrandt's works for the Stadholder, the painter was working in a walkup studio in Leiden. A self-portrait from around this time, "The Artist in His Studio"—a picture not much bigger than this magazine turned sideways—manages to be both apparently modest (a document of the painter in a plain room) and surreptitiously grand. The painter, finely robed, is lost in a transport of invention, and the picture's descriptive precision borders on the fanatical. The Rhine-water damp has invaded the room, and you can see how Rembrandt's eye ran over the decomposing wall, which was coming apart in discrete layers, each with its own pleasingly distinct texture—the risen, curling skin of the lime wash, the broken crust of the chalky plaster, the dusty brick beneath. All these materials, in their different states of deterioration, he translated faithfully into paint, and did so with such intense scrutiny that the patch of crumbling fabric begins to take on a necrotic quality, like damaged flesh. Using a soft-bristled, precisely pointed squirrel-hair brush, the kind favored by seventeenth-century miniaturists, Rembrandt has taken one set of earthy materials (the builder's) and translated it into another (the painter's). It seems like alchemy.

But was the description of the patch of crumbled wall achieved in a matter of minutes or a matter of hours? Was it the result of painstakingly calculated design or imaginative impulse? Rembrandt's critics, especially after his death, disagreed about whether the problem with him was that he worked too impetuously or that he worked too laboriously. Either way, he is generally, and not incorrectly, remembered as the greatest master of the broad brush before the advent of modernism: he kneaded, scratched, and manipulated the paint surface as if it were pasty clay—the stuff of sculpture, not painting. But from the outset Rembrandt, as much as Vermeer, was equally the master of fine motor control. He was the cutter of facets of light, the tweaker of reflections—glinting minutiae like the beads of brightness swimming on the metal bar laid across the studio door, the mote of sunshine on the tip of the painter's nose.

At first, we are mischievously led to suppose that this is a casual sketch of the painter's working space: a visual inventory of his tools and practices. (There are the palettes hanging on the wall; there is the grindstone for preparing pigment; there are the pots of medium on the table.) But, like the earliest self-portrait etchings, which are postage stamps in size but grandstanding in effect, this picture should be thought of as a Little Big Picture: an elevated letter of introduction, nothing short of a pronouncement on the nature of painting itself. Rembrandt was seldom simple. He just took pride in looking plain. Huygens writes in his memoirs:

> Lievens surpasses him in the loftiness of his concepts and the boldness of his subjects and forms. From his youthful spirit, he



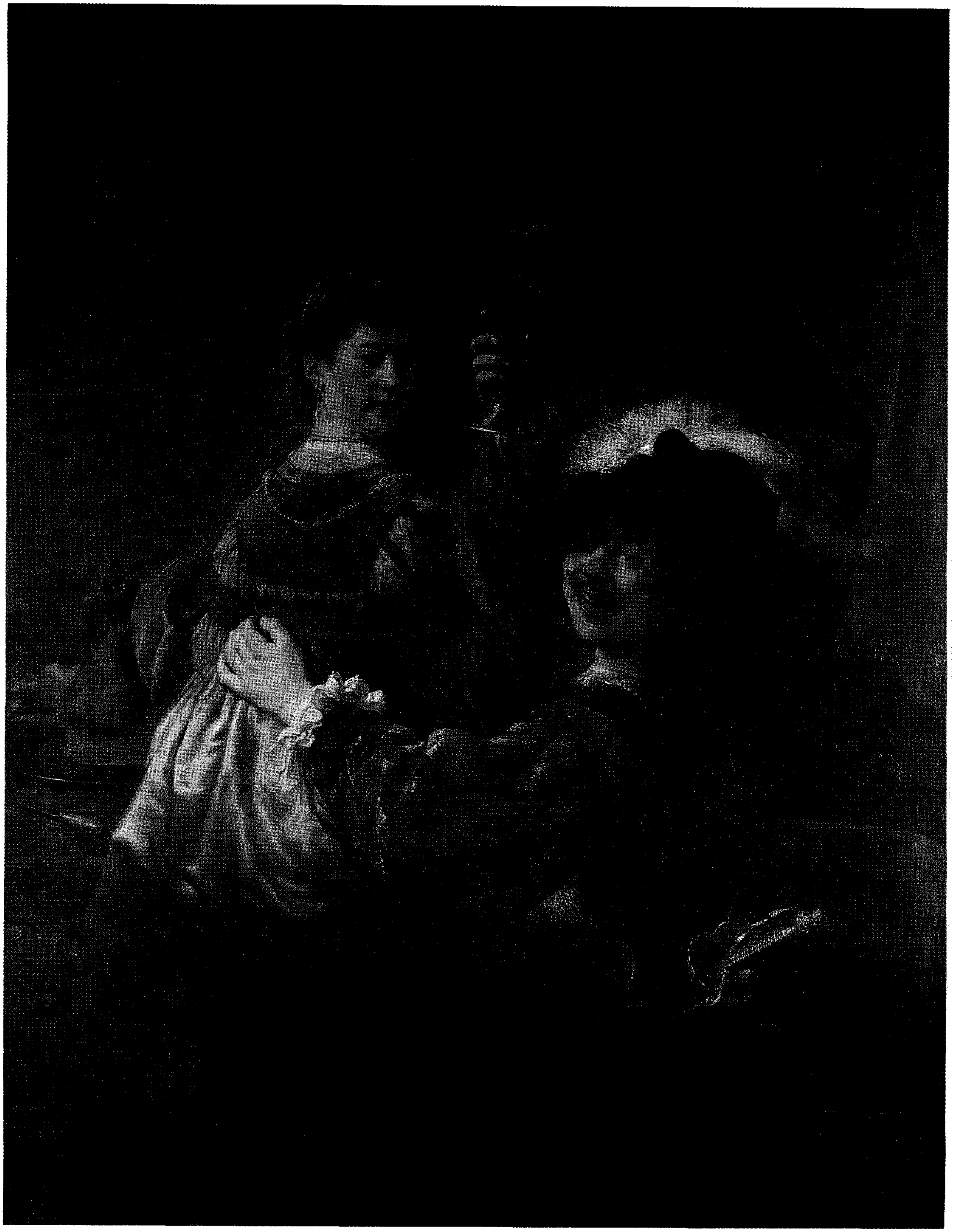
KUPFERSTICHKABINETT, BERLIN; (DETAIL) THE FRICK COLLECTION; (DETAIL) HAARLEM/JIAN CHEN/ART RESOURCE

> does nothing which is not magnificent and grand. Rather than depict subjects in their true size he chooses a larger scale. Rembrandt, on the other hand, devotes all his loving care and concentration to a small painting, achieving on a small scale a result that one would search for in vain in the largest works of others.

In other words, expressive grandiloquence versus dramatic compression, the big gesture versus the give-away glance. In three and a half centuries, no one has managed to improve on Huygens's concise formulation. There are, in fact, a few works by Lievens, like "The Resurrection of Lazarus," where his approach gives Rembrandt a good run for his money. Both Lievens and Rembrandt took Rubens as their template in painting versions of Christ on the Cross. But in the end it was Rembrandt whom Huygens and the Stadholder entrusted with the most Rubensian project anyone in the Dutch Republic could have asked for: a series of paintings on the Passion of Christ. The work made him, and his manner changed accordingly: there were no more sharp little epiphanies featuring him as the personification of painting, standing entranced in a bare studio room; no more ruffian face paintings, the root-vegetable nose crowned by a mane of outlaw hair. Increasingly, the painter, who in 1631 moved to Amsterdam in search of patronage from the rich and powerful, made himself the object of refined self-admiration: the face becomes well defined, almost bony; there is an ostrich plume in his hat and a gold chain slung about his shoulders.

The poet Charles Baudelaire memorably described portraits as models complicated by artists. In fact, portraits are a three-way negotiation, involving the sitter's sense of identity, the painter's perception of that identity, and the social conventions that the portrait is expected to satisfy. In seventeenth-century Holland, artists were required to supply a good likeness of the sitter, but even artists who gave little thought to such matters assumed that a likeness would be something other than a facsimile.

That "something" was supposed to be a visual distillation of the essential quality of the sitter. Before the Romantic period, it was a social rather than a psychological construction—a gentleman, a soldier, a scholar, a husband, a landowner. Yet portraitists were asked to represent the sitter's distinctive humor as well: flamboyant or contemplative, demure or courtly, pious or martial. In attempting this, an artist risked producing an image that failed to correspond with the features that the sitter imagined he spied in his new, Amsterdam tin-backed mirror. Understandably, then, the artists who dominated the portraiture market in the city before Rembrandt migrated there restricted themselves to a fairly narrow range of expression. An artist who was painting the portrait of a prominent figure would begin with the formulaic type (an arm akimbo for the gentleman, one hand at the hilt of a sabre for the soldier) and then attempt to individualize the portrait through a mildly expressive treatment of face or hands. The most successful artists often had their assistants paint in the bulk of the body and back-



"Self-Portrait with Saskia" filled the Romantic biographers' need for an image of Rembrandt's shameless dissipation.

ground architectural settings or interiors, and the results were predictably sober and statuesque. By 1630, however, the Amsterdam canal-house oligarchs were looking for a slightly bolder immortalization—something that better matched their conviction that they were the new commanders of the world's goods.

Rembrandt, now in his mid-twenties, seized the opportunity offered by this hardboiled patronage, and in the process reinvented the form of portraiture. He would frame the burghers of the city at three-quarters, or even full-length, giving them the grandeur of Italian or English aristocrats without the vanity. And then he would charge them a hundred guilders apiece. Thus he invested these big portraits with the dynamism and energy (and, not least, the financial value) of history paintings. Often, it is difficult for art historians to decide whether to classify a figure study, like the spectacular "Oriental," in the Metropolitan Museum, as a portrait history or a *portrait historié:* a commissioned likeness of an individual got up as a character from Scripture or mythology. This is because Rembrandt was consciously engaged in dismantling the barriers separating the genres. The figures in his histories were given the recognizable immediacy of men and women in the street (which, of course, they often were), while his portrait subjects had the urgency and energy of characters caught in a historical drama—their own. Throughout his career, he proved to be more interested in the man in God than the God in man.

Such was the case with the fur trader Nicolaes Ruts, probably Rembrandt's first commissioned portrait, which was executed in 1631, the year Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam and set up shop in collaboration with the art dealer Hendrik van Uylenburgh. It was a jaw-dropping début, arguably the best realized of Rembrandt's early portraits, and, presumably, it soon had prospective sitters flocking to his door at van Uylenburgh's house, in the St. Anthoniebreestraat.

At the center of the portrait is a spectacular demonstration of *stofuitdrukking*—the precise rendering of material texture. For Nicolaes Ruts is literally wearing his stock-in-trade: sable. The illusion of this precious fur is utterly convincing, whether on the velvety surface of Ruts's hat, or in the individual hairs on his right sleeve, which are standing up as if freshly brushed or stroked. It is as though Rembrandt, who all his life relished the sensuous pleasure of fabric, were recalling the tactile experience of his fingers roaming through the softly enclosing fur even as he applied the paint.

As a child of Leiden, the most important Dutch textile town, Rembrandt knew that no fabric—not Persian silk, not Indian calico, not French-worked damask—was more precious than sable, which was used by the Muscovite tsars as a diplomatic gift and a treaty-sweetener. But at the time Nicolaes Ruts posed for Rembrandt he did not yet have his own warehouse on the quays of Arkhangelsk, the great fur-trading center on the White Sea; most likely he was a small dealer, a partner in one of the fur syndicates that put their capital together for a specific voyage and then divided the profits according to their shares. So it was doubly important that he seem regal in his command of the business. Hence, for example, Rembrandt's unusual choice of wood for the panel support: precious mahogany rather than dependable oak. And, for all the magnificence of the coat that sits on Ruts's shoulders, Rembrandt has managed to avoid the impression of vanity or idle opulence. On the contrary, Ruts, with his brilliantly lit face, sharp eyes, and fastidiously combed whiskers, exudes a slightly impatient, edgy intelligence. He is the epitome of the entrepreneur as man of action—and a man of sound credit, as exemplified by the note or letter he grasps under his left thumb. These are large, firm hands, hands into which one might securely commit one's capital. No wonder J. P. Morgan later bought the picture.

The aversion of Rembrandt's Protestant sitters to the kind of drapery, magnificent costume, and grandiose architectural detail that were acceptable in court and in Catholic portraits allowed him to concentrate on what really mattered: the summation of character through body language and the animation of faces and hands. And, though it's difficult to avoid the impression that no painter of his century looked at the human face harder than Rembrandt, his painstaking face-mapping was never done in a spirit of physiognomic pedantry. Heads and bodies are seldom described literally; in some places the paint is applied in short, dabbed marks, in others with long, fluent arabesque curves. Rembrandt's most powerful works—like the "Portrait of an Eighty-three-Year-Old Woman," in the National Gallery in London—have the force of extreme clarity, even when their technique is audaciously loose and suggestive. In one complicated passage, a fleshy fold of the eyebrow overhangs the upper eyelid, which itself droops slightly to reveal the root ends of the eyelashes, and it is all described by an astonishing thicket of jabbing strokes—some fine, some coarse. The effect of unfocussed melancholy that comes from this moist, weaker eye's being set on the brighter side of the face is crucial to Rembrandt's effort to create a mood of poignant venerability.

There are times, especially in some of the paired marriage portraits, when Rembrandt seems merely to go through the motions of representation. The disparity between the perfect and the imperfect works is especially jolting because the best-synchronized portraits have such phenomenal vitality that their subjects seem not so much posed as caught. The calligrapher sharpening his quill and the scholar at his writing desk, head turned at a sharp angle away from his body, appear to have been interrupted during their personal routines, rather than made to "sit" and assume the social mask required for dignified immortalization. Everything about the painting in the Hermitage known as "Young Man at a Desk" goes against the convention for a "scholar portrait." Instead of the crisp-edged, meditative, almost monkish profile in which, for example, Holbein caught Erasmus, Rembrandt's writer, captured life-size, glows with robust warmth. The almost disconcerting illusion of a real presence is indicated in incidental details—the opened mouth addressing the intruding beholder, the stubby fingers securing a writing sheet on the book, and a shadow cast by the book tie against the wooden side of the reading desk, as ephemeral as the book itself is massive.

The notion that an identity might be most candidly exposed when the subject is caught in medias res is itself star-

GEMALDEGALERIE, DRESDEN/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

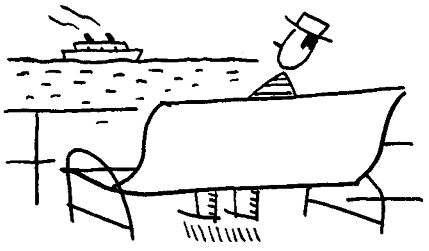
tlingly fresh. It anticipates photography, not in the crude sense of duplication but in the faith that the entirety of a character can be implied by the revelation of a single instant. Freeze-framed, this single moment has the power to suggest the continuum of a life from which it has been selectively sheared away. At their most sharply focussed, such caught moments can do still more, offering inklings of posterity—a consoling connection between the instantaneous and the eternal.

REMBRANDT was not simply the observer of metropolitan life; he was a player in it. By the time he joined forces with van Uylenburgh in Amsterdam, the dealer had established himself as a prominent and versatile entrepreneur in the city's art market. His business sold old paintings as well as freshly commissioned works, and supplied a line of copies of both the old and the new pieces, turned out by teams of assistants and students working under instruction from a master. This ambitious enterprise needed constant infusions of operating capital and skilled labor, and it got both from Rembrandt; in return, he had access to van Uylenburgh's wide circle of potential portrait sitters, and may even have been contracted to supply portraits for the "firm." There was also an extracurricular attraction present, in the person of van Uylenburgh's twenty-year-old cousin Saskia. A country girl from the Friesland, with dimples and coppery curls, she had lost both her parents and had come to stay with her relatives in town.

Imagine, then, a hive of activity in the Uylenburgh house: a showing gallery, with storage for prints and drawings as well as for paintings; a press and a series of studios toward the back, with good northern exposure; and a staff busily expanding the inventory. In some of these rooms, lessons were given in all branches of the visual arts, not least by Rembrandt himself. Within just a year or so of his arrival from Leiden, works like the group portrait "The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp" had established him as the coming man in Amsterdam; his patrons included not just traders from the middle ranks, like Ruts, but young swells, like the patrician Joan van Huydecoper. It was with this swiftly inflating sense of himself as a person of substance that Rembrandt painted his own likeness, in 1632, as a true burgher. Here he is, in his *Zondags pak*, his Sunday best—the pleated fallen collar fastened by a red ribbon, and a wide-brimmed soft hat. The painting seems a declaration of what the seventeenth century called *honnêteté:* candor, dependability, integrity.

Perhaps Rembrandt was instinctively seeking to disabuse his future sister- and brothers-in-law of the suspicion that he was an adventurer after the orphaned Saskia's estate: there could be nothing to fear from the dependable Rembrandt van Rijn, he of the prolific brush, favored by the rich and mighty. Marriage-advice books of the time were full of solemn counsel about solid virtues taking precedence over transient qualities, such as good looks and a merry disposition, charms that faded like the rose. Saskia, who had spent her life in Friesland, might have had country expectations. On the offshore islands of Friesland, after all, "night visits" were still common practice: bachelors would climb into the bedrooms of their betrothed, even, in some places, into the bed itself, for a night of unbearably sweet proximity, but they were expected to leave at dawn, with their beloved's virtue inviolate.

In a drawing inscribed "the third day after our betrothal, 8 June, 1633," Saskia wears a straw hat, the kind put on for country walks, and the drawing was executed in the materials—silverpoint on prepared vellum—that were used in conjunction with the portable, erasable sketching tablets that artists habitually carried around. It is a little act of adoration. Saskia's face and upper body are caught in a fresh early-summer light as she sits at a table, her elbow resting on an inclined surface that looks much like an artist's sketching support. Her features are delicately but exactly described, as if by fingertip exploration: the puppy-fat folds at her throat, circled by a pearl necklace; the gathered fabric of



RED DOG

We bought you for our son. Half-grown,
already your bag of skin sagged everywhere,
you fell to sleep like the dark in corners,
predictably where we wouldn't look: under
wash piled and waiting, in closets, the moan
and wheeze of your easy breathing pointed
with pips and starts of other sounds, cries
rising, a chain of woof-woof-woofs soon to
decline like cars down the hill's far glide
of night where we said he might never go.
Of course he went, as with him went also you.

You dragged, then lost a bright steel chain: two tags
hung like my dad's world war loudly declared
"Red Dog," your name, our place, and that year's
shots, identities you'd shake off to wander
the possible world. I'd hear you, coming back,
my son still out looking, afraid you'd got
worse than traveller's bite on your mopy flanks.
His shoes puffed up dirt like spurts of time. You
mostly don't expect to find the lost—and yet
fearful, I'd shout, then sleep, then shout. Gone.
You'd wait. You'd creep like sun across the lawn,

then, with him, leap up everywhere, dying splits
of rockets in the roses, crushing mulched shoots
faithfully planted year after year, and roots
whose volunteers you watered brown. When we knew
he'd leave, you'd chase God knows what twitch
of spoor, still, we took your balls. You slowed. Dirt
bedded you till you smelled. Your bones fouled floors.
Squirrels reclaimed their nuts. The awful spew
of what spoiled in you, lying by our fire,
comes back to me as the vet says you've worn
out the heart that banged to sleep beside my son.

What does it sound like, I ask? The vet listens.
Once you climbed a six-foot fence, barking, one leap,
a storm of breath we loved. Now you only eat,
ninety wheezing pounds, a processor of meat.
Like my dad, you face me, hesitate, then piss
blankets and floor. Deaf, eyes blank, the chain
slipped again, you're lost. You don't miss a boy's
games, nothing swells your interest, even the moon's
rattling tags I've hung above old yard rakes.
The vet claims it's time; he'd put you down.
Calling at last, I say "Son. It's Red. Come home."

—Dave Smith

her blouse, filled by her bosom, which rests on her right arm; the faint pressure of her tapered index finger against her left cheekbone. At the center is Saskia's heart-shaped face; the eyes show her to be amused, flattered, tolerating the examination with good humor. Flowers encircle the crown of her hat, and she holds another by the stalk, its head drooping slightly. She is his bloom, the bringer of springtime fertility, bright and dewy.

In the manner of his time, in the way that Donne and Hooft versified it, Rembrandt was in love. The Frisian wedding, which took place in early summer, during the month of haymaking, must have been noisy, copious, generous: tables piled with sweetmeats and spiced breads; wine, ale, and marigolds.

But in 1635, the worst plague year in memory, flowers were nipped in the bud. Rembrandt and Saskia's first child, named Rombertus after Saskia's father, survived barely two months and was buried in the Zuiderkerk, near van Uylenburgh's house, on February 15, 1636. Around this time, the ménage on the St. Anthoniebreestraat broke up. Van Uylenburgh moved to the other side of the street; Rembrandt and Saskia moved into their own home, on the Nieuwe Doelenstraat, facing the river Amstel. It was here that Rembrandt made a double-portrait etching of himself and Saskia, and again threw convention to the wind, or, perhaps, invented a new one. For the etching has no precedent and no successor. The compositional novelty was to align husband and wife not parallel to the picture plane but at near right angles to it. On the one hand, this preserved the customary hierarchy of the marriage portrait, with the wife notionally seated "behind" her husband. Yet, because of the brilliant lighting that falls on Saskia's rather solemn features, she can also be read as being seated on the far side of the table, *opposite* Rembrandt. The visual implication is that once he is done with his work he will turn to face her. For the moment, however, the work is everything. Rembrandt's sketching arm, cropped at the bottom of the picture, is pushed so far forward that his whole presence threatens to project through it—through the looking glass on which his stare is intensely concentrated as he works. It is as though we were behind a two-way mirror, in which the artist gazes, simultaneously, at us and at himself. Surreptitiously, the beholder becomes both the observer and the object of observation; and Rembrandt's wife looks at us looking at him looking at us. This is as intimate as it gets.

Rembrandt also did a painted portrait of himself with Saskia at some point, since an inventory drawn up in the sixteen-seventies lists "*een conterfeytsel van Rembrandt van Rijn en sijn huysvrouw*," a likeness of Rembrandt van Rijn and his wife. It has long been assumed that this is a painting, now in Dresden, that depicts a mustachioed gallant trailing a long sword from his bandolier, guffawing toothily as he puts his arm around the back of a richly dressed girl whose plump, silkily modelled derrière is planted on his knee. A mid-eighteenth-century etching after the painting came to be labelled "La Double Jouissance," and an anecdotal tradition grew up around the canvas, seeing it as an unapologetic celebration of Rembrandt and Saskia's notorious appetite for high-roller living—sex, wine, and peacock pie. For Romantic biographers, the painting's hedonism matched their need for an image of Rembrandt's shameless dissipation: the moment of hubris before his eventual fall into debt, widowerhood, and bankruptcy.

But, whatever else it is, the Dresden painting can't possibly be autobiography. For if Rembrandt is posing as the Prodigal Son, frittering away his fortune in a place of ill repute, Saskia is his dimpled whore, an unlikely role for the wife of an ambitious artist, patronized by the Stadholder and the cream of the Amsterdam patriciate. Although Rembrandt and his wife are indeed the models here, there is no doubt that the parable is the subject of the painting. A long iconographic tradition represented the Prodigal Son precisely in this manner, carousing with one hand around a prostitute and the other around a glass of wine. (Two related pen drawings from the period make Rembrandt's interest in the subject graphically plain.) Saskia-dressed-as-whore, however, shows scant enthusiasm for her raucous client. In fact, she shows the kind of bemused tolerance that generally goes with the obligations of the profession. So the earlier, naïve tradition of seeing this scene as one of lusty merriment has more recently been replaced by its antithesis: a naïvely erudite assumption on the part of scholars that Rembrandt must have intended this as a scene of moral warning. The requisite dictionary emblems are there: the peacock, a standard emblem of vanity; the tally board at the back, the emblem of ominous reckoning. And how could anyone mistake the expression on Saskia's face for anything other than a solemn reprobation? But a careful look at that expression, with the corners of the lips turned up, reveals it as tantalizingly equivocal.

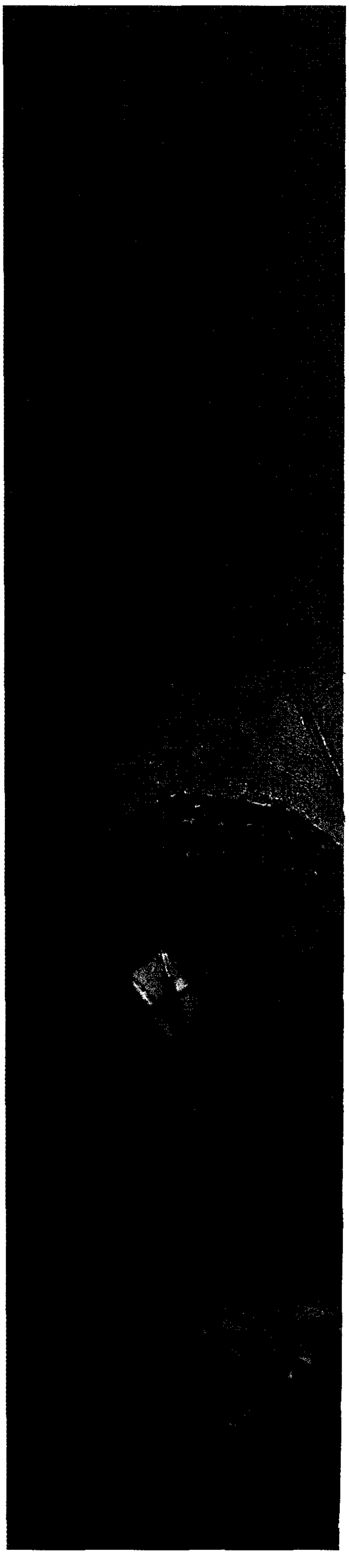
None of this means that Rembrandt is relishing his role while pretending to frown on it. What it might mean, however, is that to make the history spring to life out of the mass of clichéd images inherited from the past he needed to do more than a casual dress-up job. Instead, he buries himself in the part, makes the Prodigal uncomfortably recognizable—a street dandy with his ostrich-plume hat and flashy gold-hilted sabre. Once the painting is seen as both a Biblical parable and a contemporary genre painting, the discrepancy between the Prodigal's drunken, lecherous cackles and the self-contained knowingness of the courtesan's face becomes shockingly telling. So this is not Rembrandt. And then again it is. Or, rather, it is Rembrandt insofar as it is also a personification of all of us. He has turned into Everyman, the epitome of sinful humanity, sponging up our iniquities, mercifully oblivious of the reckoning.

IN 1639, a few years after completing the "Danae," Rembrandt made an etching of a married couple, costumed *à l'antique*, in which the wife holds a flower. She tenders it not to her husband but to the energetic figure of Death, who is climbing out of an open grave, an hourglass cupped in his skeletal palm. The couple do not shrink from this spectacle: the man is caught in mid-stride, walking *toward* the grave. His wife, seen from the rear, blond hair tumbling over her neck and shoulders, stands on the lip. It is as though they were greeting a familiar.

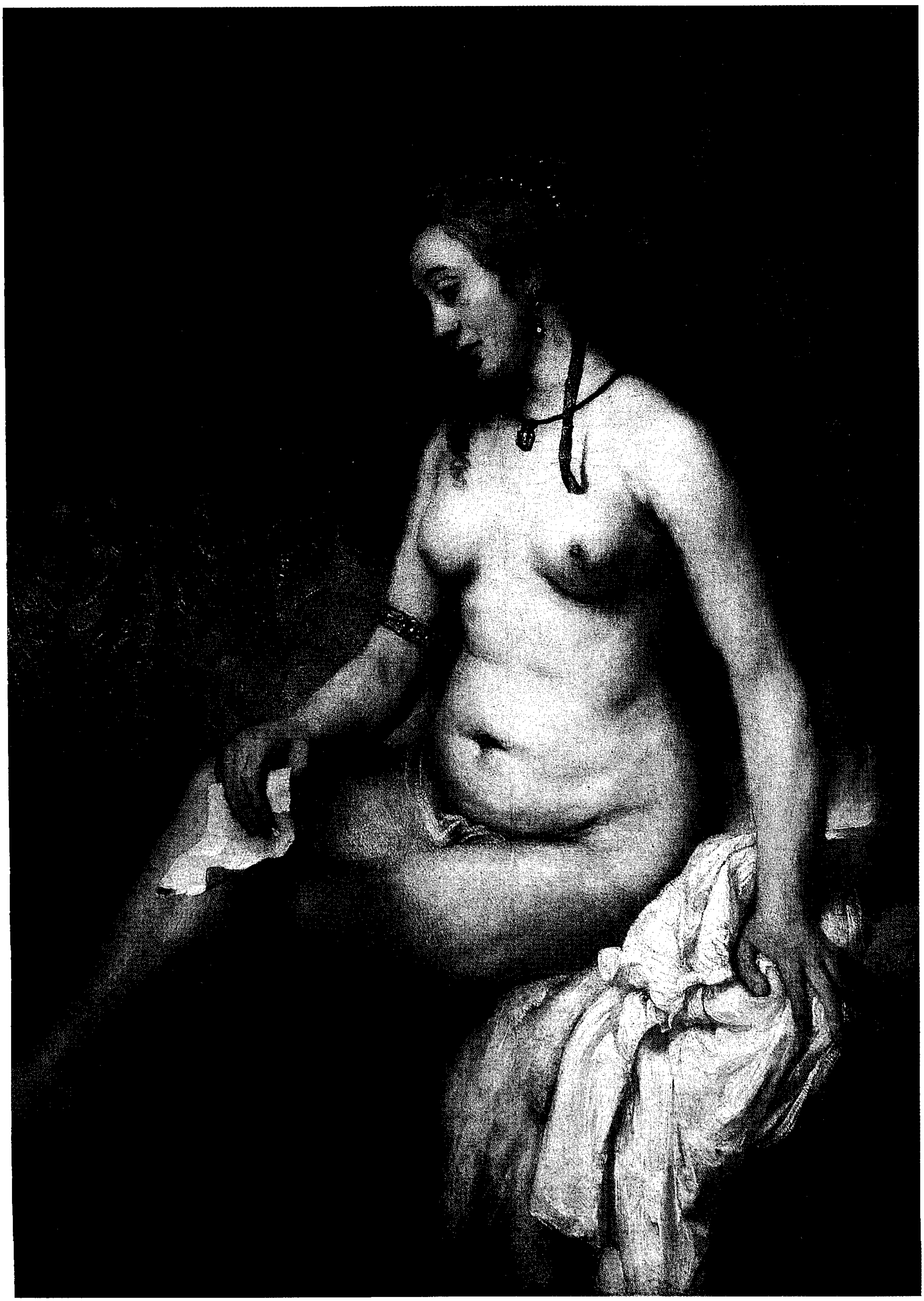
It must have felt so to Rembrandt. By the end of 1640, there were three little stones in the Zuiderkerk: for Rombartus; for a daughter, Cornelia, who had died in August, 1638; and for another Cornelia, who died almost exactly two years later. (Neither of the baby girls was more than two weeks old.) Rembrandt and Saskia's only surviving child was Titus, a boy born in 1641. The deaths of small infants were, of course, so common in seventeenth-century cities that we might suppose Rembrandt, and even Saskia, to have been hardened against grief. But by the early summer of 1642 it was Saskia who was dying. As Rembrandt completed his improbable masterpiece "The Night Watch," in a newly enlarged studio behind the house, she lay in a box bed, wasting away from tuberculosis.

On June 5, 1642, a notary was called to the house to draw up Saskia's will, and she died nine days later, leaving her baby boy a fat little fortune of some forty thousand guilders. The widower was allowed the use of the estate, to "trade, consume or do anything else" with it as he saw fit, provided that he took care of the child's needs, and that he did not remarry—a condition that would come to play a fateful role in Rembrandt's future.

At this point, most of Rembrandt's biographers send him off on walks in the countryside around Amsterdam, drinking in nature's consolation for the loss of his wife. It seems unlikely, given the tenderness of his drawings of her in the last years of her life, that he was not grieved. But it also seems to me a mistake to conjure up an image of the painter tearfully trudging the towpath. His landscape etchings of the sixteen-forties and early sixteen-fifties are not at all arcadian, in the sense of a dreamlike vista from which any urban presence has been banished. On the contrary, they usually feature a recognizable urban skyline and are marked by a gentle human traffic that presupposes the mingling of the urban and rural worlds, not their mutual isolation. Even when he etches an empty boat moored by the side of the canal, the image is loaded with the implication of its passengers, perhaps lovers,



"Bathsheba with the Letter of David," 1654. Rembrandt made the most beautiful nude of his career—in fact, the last nude he would do—a vessel of tragedy.



LOUVRE, PARIS/SCALA/ART RESOURCE

happily parked somewhere out of our sight, but not out of our imagination.

ON October 1, 1649, Rembrandt's young housekeeper, Hendrickje Stoffels, appeared before a notary. She was twenty-three years old, a child of the military, with dark eyes and fair skin—a trim little figure. In brief proceedings, the notary asked her to affirm that an agreement set down in writing on June 15th between her master and Geertje Dircx, a widow who'd been hired as a dry nurse for Titus, had been accepted by all concerned. She so affirmed, and she could go home and tell Rembrandt that she had done as he asked.

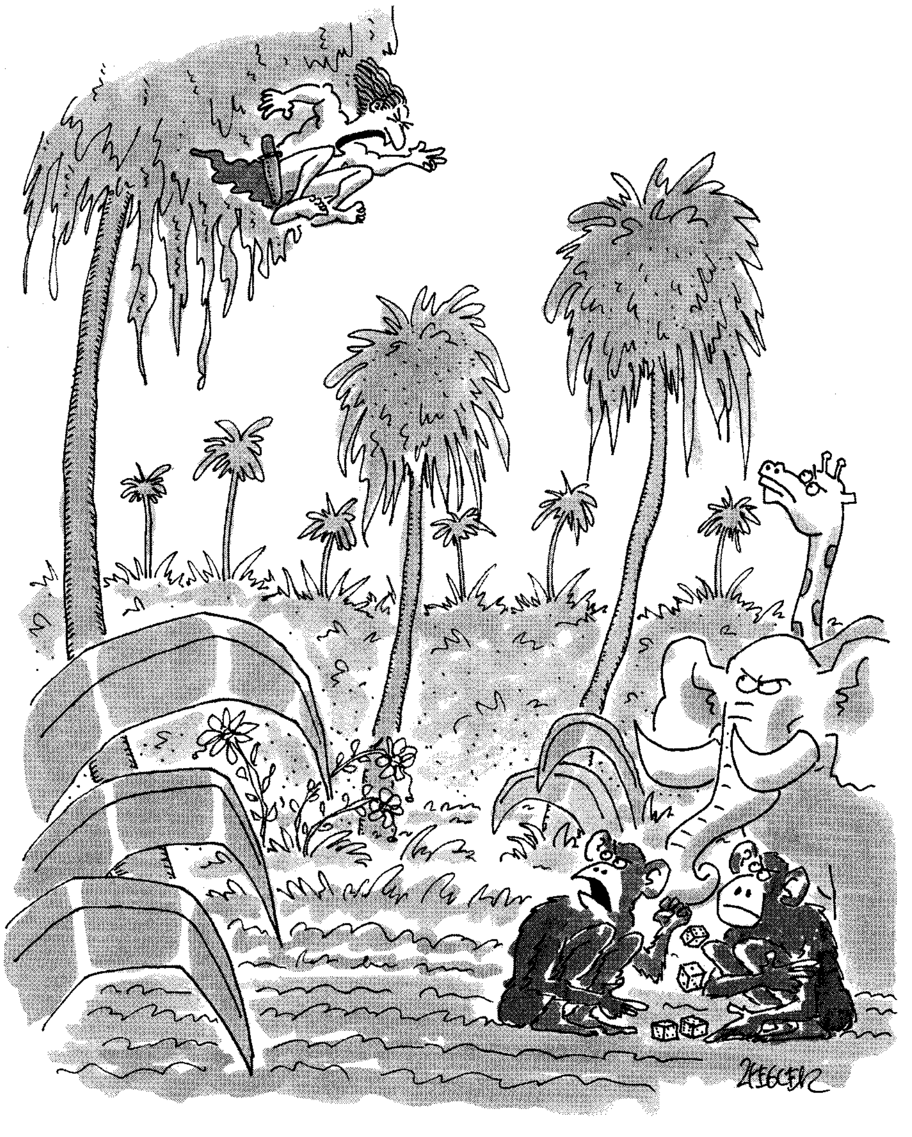
Some said that a lot of trouble could have been avoided if her master had answered the summons of the Commissioners of Marital Affairs to appear himself in the matter of the complaint of Geertje Dircx. But how could such a great man stoop to such low things? Hendrickje was honored that she could do him this service. She was the keeper of his house now—the one with the keys, who locked the doors at night.

Hendrickje had come to the house not long after Titus's mother died. At the time, the orders were given—what to buy, where to sweep—by Geertje, who was caring for the little boy. Pretty soon she was tending to the master, too, and he seemed glad enough of it, giving her some of his dead wife's jewels. Geertje apparently took this as a sign that Rembrandt would treat her in a proper Christian way, and marry her. But masters seldom married maids, and that was not how things came to pass.

Who knows when Rembrandt looked at Geertje wearing, once too often, perhaps, Saskia's pearls, and felt a twinge of remorse and then even anger, finding fault with this or that—a supper spoiled, a door left open when he had said it should be shut? Or when he stopped talking kindly to her? Or when he started looking at Hendrickje, the younger woman, an instant longer than necessary?

No artist of the seventeenth century pictured the sexual act quite as Rembrandt did. Despite the vigilance of the censor, erotic prints, most of them originating in France and Italy, circulated in the Netherlands, and Rembrandt had his own collection of them, probably including the choicest items, Agostino Carracci's *lascivie* and Marcantonio's extremely graphic etchings for "I Modi"—"The Postures." The energetic coupling in these images was often enacted by figures from the realm of art: curly-phallused satyrs or Pans, taken right off Greek vases, or (in Marcantonio's case) strapping bearded heroes and receptive nymphs modelled along the lines of antique Venuses. Rembrandt's startling prints of fornication, executed in the mid-sixteen-forties, while he was involved with Geertje—"The Monk in the Cornfield" and "The French Bed" ("Het Ledikant")—don't belong in this statuesque tradition at all. The "Ledikant" shows a couple in recognizably contemporary dress, copulating with their undershifts still on, and the most obvious feature in both prints is the heavy animal clambering of the act, rather than the graceful erotic athleticism of Italian pornography.

Rembrandt would never be quite so preoccupied with the machinery of lust in his art again, but in his nonartistic life sex was a matter-of-fact business. It wasn't long, at any rate, before he wanted Hendrickje in his bed and Geertje out of it. And then out of the house. Rembrandt must have repented especially of his rashness in letting her have Saskia's jewels, and, even more, perhaps, of giving her a silver marriage medal, though it had been left carefully unengraved. Since he could not take back any of it, he needed to make sure that on Geertje's death (and who knew, in the plague-infested city, how soon that might be?) the jewels would come back to the family. So, in January of 1648, he had Geertje make a will, bequeathing her property to Titus, and she subsequently promised never to sell or pawn the jewels, or to change her will; in exchange,



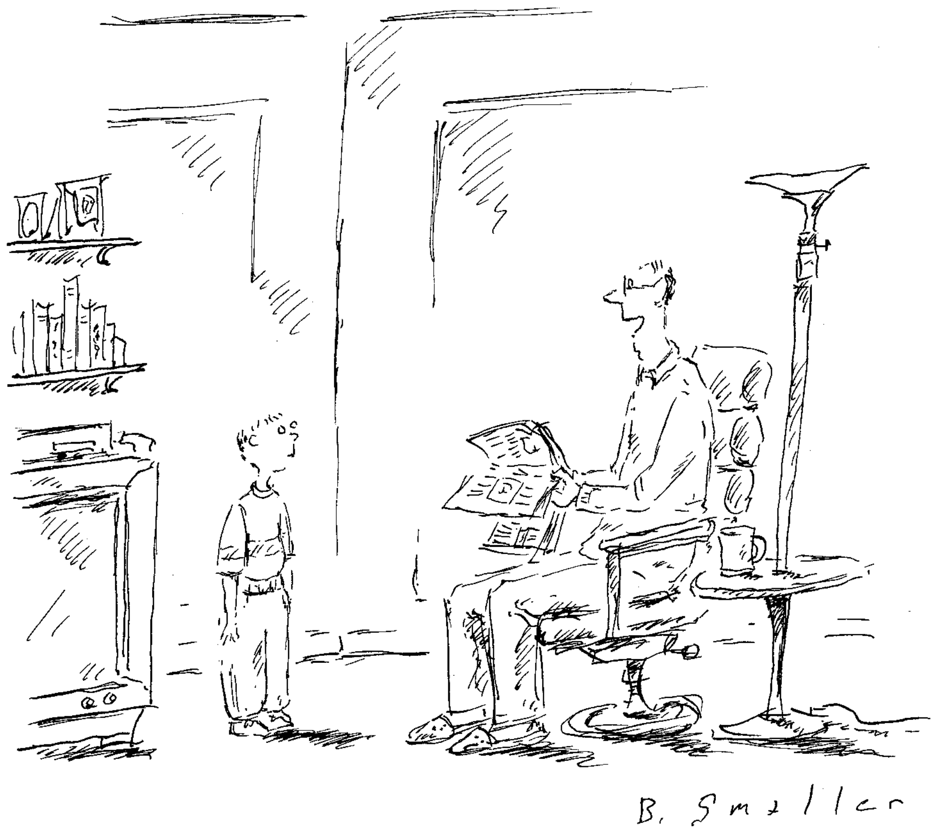
"Oh, great! Here comes the policeman of the world again."

he would give her a hundred and sixty guilders a year for the rest of her life.

As Hendrickje affirmed in her statement before the Commissioners of Marital Affairs, Geertje had assented to that agreement on June 15th and, in the presence of witnesses, had put her mark on it. But, once out of Rembrandt's house, she had a bitter sense that she had been used badly. She was living in a miserable room and was getting desperate. So she found a barge skipper's wife who lent money, and she pawned sixteen of the most valuable objects—including a gold ring with a diamond cluster. If the painter found out about it and made trouble, well, too bad. She would sue him for breach of marriage contract. And she was soon demanding higher monthly maintenance payments from him.

One can only imagine Rembrandt's fury at this challenge to his authority from the illiterate, cast-aside domestic: he must have felt that he was a victim of blackmail, threatened with scandal if he did not yield to her request. He was finally forced to appear himself before the Commissioners of Marital Affairs, where he listened while Geertje stated with no equivocation that Rembrandt had made "verbal promises of marriage and . . . given her a ring; and that furthermore he had slept with her on numerous occasions and so she demands that the defendant marry her or undertakes to support her." Rembrandt's retort was legally considered and shrewd. He flatly denied ever having proposed marriage to Geertje, nor was he obliged, he said, to admit ever having shared his bed with her. That was for her to prove. Let her try.

The three commissioners must have heard this sort of thing before. But they had certainly never heard such a case brought against anyone so influential or famous as Rembrandt van Rijn. They undoubtedly believed at least some of Geertje's story. She, however, had acted in clear violation of her agreement with the painter, and they were not about to force a housekeeper into the bed of the Apelles of Amsterdam over his clear repugnance. So the terms of the agreement were upheld, with Rembrandt now obliged to pay Geertje two hundred guilders a year instead of a hundred and sixty—a twenty-five-per-cent increase. With that judgment, they provided for the unhappy woman without imposing an impossible marriage on the painter. Done and done fairly.



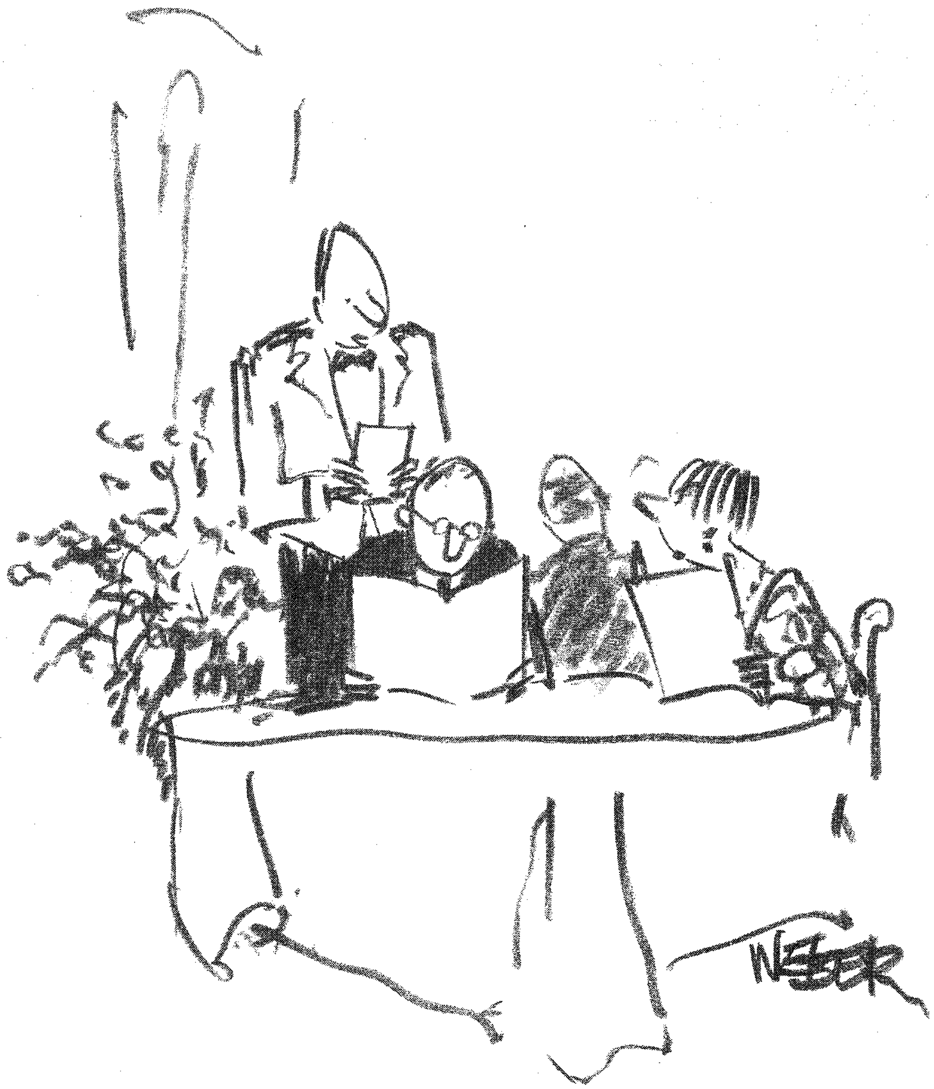
"*Son, everyone went to college in the sixties—there was a war going on.*"

• •

But as far as Rembrandt was concerned it was not done. The man who created so much beauty showed himself, in this matter, capable of great moral ugliness. In 1650, he contrived to collect malicious gossip from some of Geertje's neighbors and get them to swear before a notary that she was of unsound mind and—the implication was—morals. That, Rembrandt evidently hoped, was the weapon that would put Geertje away for long enough so that she could do him no further harm. There were places of confinement and correction for women who were judged unstable, and before the year was out the unhappy Geertje found herself in one—the Spinhuis, in Gouda, a pitiless place, smelling of lye and pease porridge. Most of its occupants were petty thieves, drunks, and women with violent histories, all of whom were subjected to a regime of austerity in which they were morally and physically chastised, and were set to work spinning (the exemplary activity of virtuous women) until their fingers were numb.

By the time Geertje was released, nearly five years later, Rembrandt was seriously in arrears on the payment for his expensive house, and he had been unable to stop himself from buying art works to fill it—everything from Mantegna drawings to porcelain cassowaries. He was so hard-pressed that he defaulted on the payment he was supposed to make to Geertje under the terms of the court settlement. His prisoner now became his creditor. It was too late for both of them: Rembrandt descended into a self-dug pit of debt and disaster; Geertje, whose health must have suffered badly during her years in the Spinhuis, died in the second half of 1656, before she could witness the painter's humiliation as a bankrupt.

And Hendrickje Stoffels, who succeeded Geertje Dircx in Rembrandt's bed? She was established as the mistress of the grandest painter in Amsterdam, in a house filled to the rafters with students, statues, paintings, strange-looking weapons, and stuffed animals and birds. Persons of importance were



"I hope you've noticed that our menu is refreshingly devoid of creativity."

• •

always coming and going, and Titus was growing into a beautiful boy, with his mother's curly auburn hair. Of course, there were gossips in the neighborhood muttering that she was a lost woman, that she had prostituted herself to the wicked reprobate Rembrandt. Until 1654, she could afford to ignore their prattle. Then Hendrickje became pregnant, and soon even the most voluminous skirts could not conceal her condition from the pious and the censorious. In June, when she was five months along, a summons came for her to appear before the Church Council, to answer reports that she was "living in whoredom with the painter Rembrandt." When she finally mustered the courage to appear, she was formally banned from the Lord's Supper, the Calvinist communion. Whether she was contrite or not, a daughter was born three months later and baptized Cornelia. And, unlike her two dead namesakes, the third Cornelia survived.

Though there is no securely documented portrait of Hendrickje, it is all but certain that she was the model who posed for Rembrandt in various states of undress and half-dress between 1654 and 1656: a full, oval face, with heavy-lidded dark eyes, and a graceful, amply rounded body. Rembrandt did not display Hendrickje's pregnancy in his "Bathsheba" of 1654; presumably he began work on the painting before her body had begun to fill out. But anyone who saw the masterpiece would have known the fateful significance of pregnancy to the story, related in the second Book of Samuel. Bathsheba is caught in a state of poignant meditation, head slightly downcast, as she holds the letter from King David that calls her to his presence, and, she evidently realizes, for more than a royal audience. Her tragic predicament is to be made to choose between disloyalty to her king and disloyalty to her husband, Uriah the Hittite. Rembrandt, by displaying her beautiful body so fully, implicates the beholder in David's covetous voyeurism as he spies on her bathing from the roof of his palace. Twenty years earlier, Rubens posed his wife, Helena Fourment, in the same way, on the point of receiving the royal letter from an African page. But the expression on the face of Rubens's "Bathsheba" is more that of the coquette than of the sacrifice. Painting his wife as though she were expecting a date, Rubens was following an iconographic tradition of representing Bathsheba as a seductress.

Rembrandt, on the other hand, made the most beautiful nude of his career—in fact, the last nude he would do—a vessel of tragedy. The figure is stoically pensive, the lines of the body evoking, for once, the self-containment of classical friezes, to suggest Bathsheba's fatalism. The mood is intensely self-interrogatory, and the painting is loaded with contrasts—between the richly brocaded gold robe, the garment of her royal destiny, and the pure white shift of her betrayed innocence; between Bathsheba's dewy, roselike beauty and the knowing, shaded countenance of the old servant washing her feet.

At the emotional and compositional center of the painting is the letter, on which not only David's fate but the fate of the whole House of Israel seems to be inscribed. For, although David later took Bathsheba as his wife, the child born of their illicit union perished, and, as the prophet Nathan warned the king, "The sword shall never depart from thine house." Rembrandt has curled back one corner of the paper to reveal David's handwriting, and the sheet casts a light shadow on Bathsheba's thigh. But she is not reading the thing. She has already understood too well its content. She stares beyond it, toward the servant washing her feet. This ostensibly anecdotal detail becomes weighted with tragic implications, and Rembrandt means us to see it. For the Bible relates that David lay with Bathsheba after "she was purified from her uncleanness"—in other words, after her post-menstrual ritual bath. In that sense, Bathsheba is watching an act of cleansing turn into an act of pollution, the reaffirmation of her conjugal purity into the preparation for her adultery. No wonder, then, that her gaze is both concentrated and distracted, the lips soft and loose, on the verge of trembling, the eyebrows tightly arched, as though battling the onset of tears.

At the same time that Rembrandt was painting Hendrickje posing beside the water of guilt, he was sketching her wading into the water of innocence, in the stunningly beautiful "Woman Bathing in a Stream." Here the combination of her décolletage, exposing her delicate cleavage, and the shift lifted above and in front of the deep shadow at her upper thigh and groin gives the painting a powerful, tender sensuality. In all likelihood, this work, so intimate and, in its way, so daring, was painted by Rembrandt for himself and Hendrickje—a personal celebration of their intimacy.

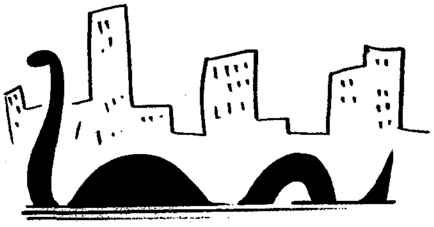
Yet Rembrandt paints Hendrickje *not* looking at him. He evidently loves her not as a possession but for her self-possession, and he catches her sidelong, in an act of self-absorption. Literal readings of the painting suggest that Hendrickje is testing the riverbed in search of a secure footing. And perhaps Rembrandt did want to inject a note of caution in what is otherwise a gloriously incautious and liberated act of painting. More likely, though, Hendrickje, the suggestion of a smile playing about her lips, is looking into the watery mirror of her own reflected body, privy to a view in fact denied us, and obscured by the depth of that shadow above her shift.

The painting seems to have been done at speed, the crucial shadows at elbow and thigh and beneath her chin indicated in charcoal-black and the covering paint laid on with a creamily loaded brush. There are exquisitely precise things: the corkscrew curl hanging over her neck; the faint, slightly oily glistening of her forehead; a minute highlight on her upper-right eyelid. And there are passages of whirlwind suggestiveness—above all, Hendrickje's right hand, which is treated so freely and broadly that generations of connoisseurs assumed this to have been a damaged passage.

A look at the famous hands of Jan Six in Rembrandt's portrait of him, painted a year earlier, suggests otherwise. In both paintings, but especially in "The Woman Bathing in a Stream," Rembrandt is beginning to do something entirely original. He is inventing the anti-pose—consciously disassembling the elements of a smoothly integrated representation, and exposing rather than concealing the painterly hand. He was doing this, moreover, at a time when his contemporaries, including Jan Lievens, were refining their manner in the direction of a glossier finish.

In other words, while fashion increasingly demanded exuberant outwardness (a clear line, a bright light, and a smooth polish), Rembrandt was absorbed by a dashing, thickly applied, suggestively broken line, a flickering light, and a provocatively unfinished finish. Prefigured here, the viscous smears and dabs, the sheer intoxication of gestural painting in late works like "The Jewish Bride" owed nothing to any precedent or "rules of art." Nor was Rembrandt's late style, as is sometimes argued, perversely *old*-fashioned. (Scholars who advance that theory invariably fail to identify the particular old fashion to which Rembrandt was allegedly returning.) The truth is really much simpler. It is what countless generations of his admirers have always innocently supposed to be the case: that Rembrandt's experiments with paint were, in the profoundest sense, creatively disobedient, instinctual, free.

Rembrandt's inward turn in the last decade and a half of his life was not exclusively toward philosophical or spiritual preoccupations but into the material interior of art-making. It occurred to no other artist until Courbet and Degas, for example, to make the business of nude modelling *itself* the subject matter of art. In a series of etchings, all dating from the middle and late sixteen-fifties, Rembrandt drew his models not in the course of their painterly transformation into heroines or goddesses but, instead, sitting by the warm stoves described by his pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten in an account of Rembrandt's studio. Rembrandt's purpose in sketching the actual physical circumstances in which the women were posing was the creation of another genre, much like images of women making lace or sitting at spinning wheels. Paradoxically, by situating them halfway between dress and undress—with their caps still on and their skirts in place—and by having them feel the cold, Rembrandt is quite knowingly disrupting art's authority to make those bodies its representational property. These women are no longer the passive vehicles of art's great makeover (from a working girl called Trijn to a goddess called Diana); rather, Rembrandt restores to them their bodily reality, implies the goose bumps from the chilly air.



For Rembrandt, this wandering across the boundary between art and daily life was a wonderfully rich subject, and, until his death, in 1669, he returned again and again to the dwelling places of family affection—never more sweetly than in a drawing in the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford. The setting is his studio, on the first floor of the house; the presence of the painter himself is announced in proxy by the tall easel at the left. The room is almost completely in shade, except for light allowed to stream in through the upper part of the window, which falls mainly on the head and the naked upper body of the model, Hendrickje. She is seated by the fireplace to keep warm, and her pose—broad shoulders pushed forward, cap on her head, her shirt down around her waist, skirt on, one hand gripping the seat of the chair—shows us the woman rather than the model. Not just a woman, in fact, but a mother. For, in a stunning indication of the entanglement of life and art, Rembrandt has used a reed pen to emphasize the two objects set on the table: on the left, the raised and slightly banked surface of his sketching and etching desk; on the right, a little cradle, just big enough for a newborn, with the cloth thrown back from the opening. It's not beyond the bounds of possibility, then, that Hendrickje has taken her shirt off to be both mother and model—to nurse as well as to pose. Milk, as well as ink, has flowed in this little room. ♦

THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

FREE MONEY

The Internet I.P.O. that made two women rich, and a lot of people furious.

BY ERIK LARSON

SHORTLY after noon on March 19, 1999, an Internet company called iVillage began selling common stock, as the culmination of a carefully orchestrated initial public offering, or I.P.O. The day before, the company's pricing committee had met at about four o'clock and set a formal offering price at twenty-four dollars a share, but everyone involved knew that, once trading began, the stock's value would increase dramatically. Those allowed to buy shares at the offering price were almost certain to reap great gains, unlike lay investors, for whom the outcome was far riskier. The opening bid was $95.88. In that instant, iVillage's leaders, Candice Carpenter, the C.E.O., and Nancy Evans, the editor-in-chief, became multimillionaires, at least on paper. To outsiders, the transaction looked like magic. A company as ethereal as air, with deep losses, few physical assets, little proprietary technology, extravagant rates of spending, a high employee "burn rate," and powerful emerging competitors, had accomplished one of the most successful I.P.O.s ever and suddenly was worth more than two billion dollars. It all seemed so easy. Bingo.com.

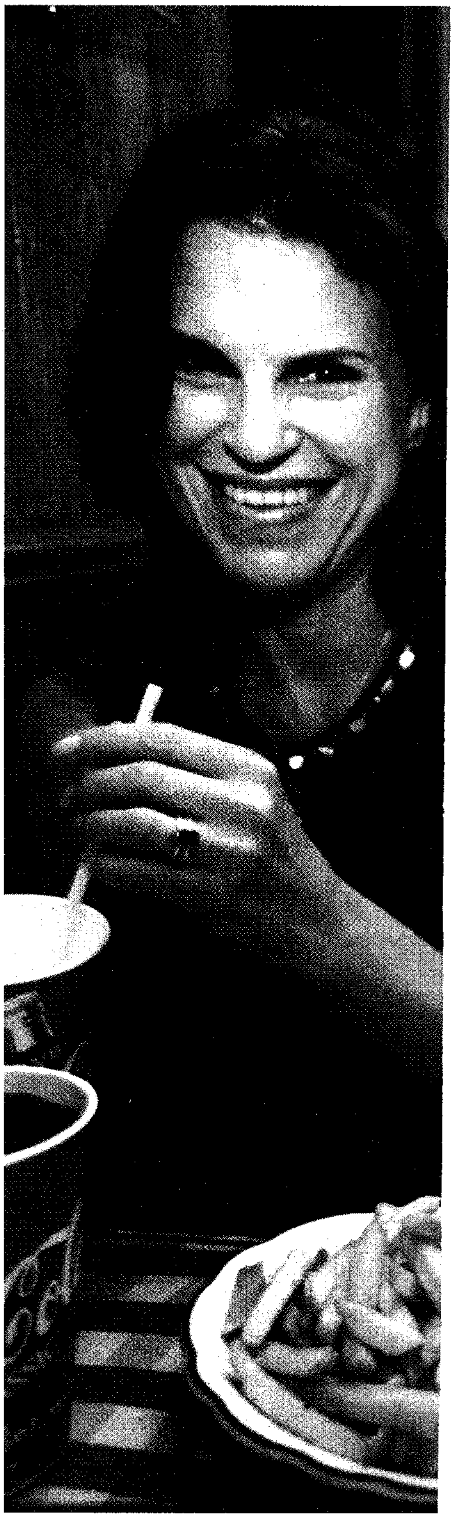
The road to this I.P.O., however, was neither easy nor direct. Its contours reveal forces that have made thousands of Internet investors and entrepreneurs rich despite the fact that most new Net ventures have yet to show a profit. In that sense, iVillage, which offers an array of services and advice for women, is typical of the dozens of startups in so-called new media. Its good fortune, however, attracted an unusual amount of attention—and hostility—because Carpenter and Evans were neither "Webheads" nor computer geeks, but two women in their forties with controversial reputations rooted in the realm of books, magazines, and television. To their old-media peers, their sudden windfall seemed to show that anyone with a few ideas and a lot of nerve could make a killing in cyberspace.

In Netspeak, there are two kinds of people: those who "get it," and those who don't. To get it means that you understand the extent to which the Internet will change work and commerce in the next millennium, and that you grasp why the race to stake out "real estate" in cyberspace is making so many people so rich so quickly. "What you're buying as an investor in this marketplace is the premise that the Internet is literally on the order of magnitude of the industrial revolution," said Bill Brady, the head of corporate finance for Credit Suisse First Boston's technology group, which helped iVillage go public.

Candice Carpenter, the primary architect of iVillage, not only "got it"; she also understood that in the absence of conventional yardsticks, such as profits and tangible assets, the stock market would find other ways to discriminate among hundreds of Internet startups. She grasped early on that such intangible qualities as brand identity and the ability to tell a good story—that is, to construct a narrative about how a few bright ideas might grow into a large profitable enterprise—would become paramount. She pioneered the use of "integrated sponsorships," where advertisers participate in the creation of content, the information, articles, and services that appear on the company's Web sites. She also foresaw that women, who were slow to embrace the Internet, eventually would constitute a vast and coveted on-line market, and that E-commerce would become an important source of revenue. Among her past and present colleagues, there is wide agreement that Carpenter's greatest strength may be her talent for selling a vision of herself as a successful Internet mogul, a process she calls "self-branding."

"Candice is what Internet entrepreneurship is all about," said Martin Yudkovitz, the president of NBC Interactive Media, which last November struck an alliance with iVillage. "She is not a small voice, she is not a timid personality. This is about creating multibillion-dollar market caps, up against some big existing traditional companies. . . . You think about how intimidating that is. A lot of very smart people won't last twenty minutes in that culture."

But the traits that allowed Carpenter



iVillage founders Candice Carpenter

cy Evans. The company's I.P.O. cash gives it the edge in the battle for the on-line women's market. Photograph by Harry Benson.

to thrive—her demanding personality and penchant for self-promotion—also contributed to the incredulity and bitterness that greeted the iVillage I.P.O. Newspaper photographs of the iVillage executives celebrating their good fortune, particularly one showing Nancy Evans smoking a celebratory cigar, fed the hostility. A *Slate* diarist summarized the reaction in media circles this way: "Hey, if 'fucking iVillage' (as it's invariably called) can do it, we can too."

CANDICE CARPENTER is forty-seven years old and a single mother. She lives in a bright penthouse apartment on Park Avenue and Seventy-fourth Street with two daughters, aged four and five, attended by a vegetarian chef and a couple of nannies with overlapping schedules. Each morning, Carpenter commutes to the sixth floor of a nondescript building at 212 Fifth Avenue, on the edge of the Flatiron District, which is now often called Silicon Alley. These offices, where low partitions separate nests of young managers, plus offices on a couple of floors in each of two buildings farther down Fifth Avenue and fifty-some computer servers lodged at a secure

"Now, with a firm twist, I'll remove his attorney."

"hosting farm" in Jersey City, New Jersey, constitute nearly all of iVillage's tangible assets. Beyond this, iVillage exists as a ganglion of corporate alliances and digital pathways that together form a network of seventeen Web sites, or "channels," through which the company seeks to build a community of women on the Internet, and thereby to help them endure divorce, miscarriage, breast cancer, rude children, corporate stress, unfortunate taste in boyfriends, and whatever else a woman in the twenty-five-to-fifty-four demographic is likely to experience. In the process, iVillage hopes to "monetize" this community by eventually selling enough products and advertising to make a huge profit.

I first met Carpenter four months ago in her office, overlooking Fifth Avenue. She wore a dark gray pants-and-jacket combination and a peach-colored top with the opacity of mosquito netting. If you heard only her voice, you would imagine someone much younger. She punctuates her sentences with words like "sucks" and "gig" and refers to women as girls. Her eyes are the color of smoked glass, and during two of our many conversations, held in New York and Seattle, she chose to wear a pair of sunglasses with leopard-patterned frames, which seem to be emerging as a personal trademark.

The key to Carpenter's business strategy—and to that of virtually every other Internet venture—is the concept of "stickiness," the intangible quality that brings individuals to a Web site and holds them for long sessions during which, companies hope, they will click away like crazy and generate vast numbers of "page views," the successive screens that users encounter as they navigate through a site. The more "sticky traffic" a company can accumulate, the better it does in the ratings tabulated by Media Metrix, a Silicon Alley company that does for the Internet what Nielsen Media Research does for television. It tracks data from some twenty-one thousand Web sites, and issues monthly rankings that are based on how many "unique visitors" each one has attracted in the most recent period. In August, iVillage ranked twenty-seventh among all Web properties, with five million visitors. America Online, with fifty-three million, was first.

Each page view, in theory, represents an opportunity for an advertiser to steal the attention of a visitor, whom Net marketers often describe simply as a pair of "eyeballs." Without profits to tout, companies like to tally their page views as a way of demonstrating growth, and in order to boost the tally they deploy various "stickiness" devices. Free E-mail is a popular way to draw people back several times a day. In August, iVillage reported that in the second quarter its visitors saw an average of more than a hundred million page views per month, thanks to such stickiness devices as E-mail; free personal home pages; a daily horoscope; nightly chats on current events, careers, and other topics led by a network of volunteers; and on-line consultations with experts in a variety of fields, like Dr. Patti Britton, the "Sex Coach."

While exploring "Parent Soup," the company's original Web site, I found a good example of how iVillage makes a site sticky, and eventually—it hopes—profitable. Here a pregnant woman can enter her due date and receive a calendar showing day by day what's likely to be happening inside her body. iVillage links women with overlapping calendars to a "Pregnancy Circle," a support group where they can trade advice and concerns. Throughout the calendar, iVillage gently prods them to buy stuff.

I entered a date and received a calendar that recommended twenty books over ten months. I clicked on one title and rocketed to Amazon.com. At other points, my calendar recommended that I prepare for the arrival of my new baby by shopping at iVillage's on-line store, iBaby, which, in turn, suggested that I visit iMaternity, where a "Maternity Checklist" listed all the clothing I would need for a comfortable journey toward parenthood.

iVillage was one of the first companies to envision a more intimate relationship between users and advertisers—what it calls "integrated sponsorships." Last February, for example, iVillage launched a pet channel, sponsored by Ralston Purina, which offers chat rooms, message boards, and access to pet experts. As of now, there is only one pet expert—Jane Popham, a Ralston employee. In an early prospectus that iVillage prepared for its I.P.O., the company stated that Ralston Purina had agreed to "assist iVillage in the marketing, distribution and fulfillment of Ralston Purina products within the pet channel." Soon the channel will include an on-line pet store.

So far, though, iVillage's goal of monetizing its community has been spectacularly elusive. Like so many other Internet startups, it has seen costs, not profits, rise each year. Last year, it lost nearly forty-four million dollars and ripped through thirty million in cash that it had raised from private investors. The iVillage I.P.O. prospectus warned investors, correctly, that such losses might increase over the foreseeable future. But the company's prediction that more women would come on-line has been borne out, too: iVillage now has 2.1 million registered members, up from three hundred and sixty-three thousand at the end of its second quarter last year. This audience has helped it to attract such blue-chip sponsors as Kimberly-Clark, A.T. & T., and Ford and to forge key alliances with A.O.L. and Amazon.com. Like cable-TV companies, which spent heavily at the outset to attract a mass audience, Carpenter expects iVillage eventually to become immensely profitable, but this strategy remains unproved. Jeffrey F. Rayport, a Harvard Business School expert on E-commerce, says, "It's not clear that anyone, least of all iVillage, understands how to convert the social dynamic into a business."

For now, though, iVillage is flush with I.P.O. cash and is making deals it otherwise could not have attempted, thereby gaining an advantage over other companies just now beginning to target women on-line. In August, it acquired the Lamaze Publishing Company for $102.3 million, most of it in iVillage stock. Earlier this month, iVillage bought a $7.5 million stake in an on-line drugstore and health-care site called PlanetRx.com, which agreed to pay $22.5 million to become iVillage's exclusive drug and vitamin retailer.

"We're pretty well stocked for all-out war," Carpenter told me. "I mean, let's rock and roll."

TALK like this would have surprised anyone who knew Carpenter back in her home town, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, when she was a teen-age beauty whose idea of ambition was to prevent the chlorine in the pool at the local club from destroying her hair. Her older brother, Peter, then an Air Force officer shuttling between Washington and Saigon, did not approve of her frivolity, and enrolled Candice in a twenty-eight day Outward Bound course in Colorado. Wilderness epiphany has become something of an overachiever's cliché, but Carpenter's life was undisputably transformed. She returned to the program every summer during her college years at Stanford University, becoming an accomplished rock climber and, eventually, an instructor at the National Outdoor Leadership School.

In 1979, Carpenter married a former Boeing executive, with whom she founded an Outward Bound program for executives. In 1981, she enrolled in Harvard Business School; from that point, her marriage began to unravel. She graduated in 1983, divorced in 1984. Her first job after graduation was at American Express, a company so focussed on its corporate identity that it regularly convened a "branding committee" to scrutinize every new product, advertisement, and mail solicitation. Carpenter was soon put in charge of a credit-related unit, but she chafed at the company's methodical pace. She quit after five years to become the president of Time-Life Video, a small, Virginia-based division of Time Warner, which sold mail-order videos. Here, too, she disliked the "dusty, slow-moving" culture of Time-Life, but she was impressed by the entertainment executives on the Warner side of the company. "For the first time, I had role models, people more like me," she said. "More independent. Good deal-makers. A little more cowboy energy. They were personalities. They were larger than life." Carpenter wanted the same thing.

Carpenter sought out the deal-makers she most admired, and one of them, Barry Diller, who was then the chairman of the home-shopping channel QVC, hired her to launch Q2, a more sophisticated cousin of the channel. But Carpenter's one-year tenure at QVC was turbulent. The channel's line managers viewed her and her newly hired team as glamorous, overpaid interlopers. Diller became embroiled in a bid to acquire CBS, and had no time to mediate. Carpenter never got the chance to show what she could do with Q2, Diller told me, because "there were too many things that were clanging together at the time."

Carpenter saw that Q2 had a fundamental flaw. It had targeted the kind of mobile, career-driven audience that did not watch much TV. "The problem for busy regular people is they're not going to sit there for a week to see if tennis shoes float by," Carpenter said. "The real thing you needed for that was the Internet."

THIS was 1994. America Online was bracing itself for fundamental change: Microsoft was planning an Internet network, and the practice of charging users by the hour seemed about to give way to flat monthly fees. A.O.L. wanted to investigate Internet shopping as a source of revenue and saw parallels in Carpenter's Q2 experience. In February, 1995, Ted Leonsis, the president of A.O.L. Services, hired Carpenter as a consultant and gave her a laptop. She went on-line for the first time, and was appalled.

"I thought it just sucked," she told me. "I thought, How could anything be this bad and be taken this seriously?" What she found appealing, however, was the way groups of like-minded people tended to converge for on-line conversations. "The gay community, the quilt community, the pet community—those things were cooking," she said.

That month, a thirty-three-year-old entrepreneur named Robert Levitan came to New York after selling a small video-yearbook company he had founded in North Carolina. His brother had gone to Harvard with Carpenter and suggested that Levitan pay her a call. A few days after they met, she invited him to fly down to A.O.L. headquarters, in Virginia, to sit in on a meeting of the "gooey" team—the GUI, or graphic-user interface, group—which designed on-line shopping pages. She hired Levitan to assist her as a consultant on new business models.

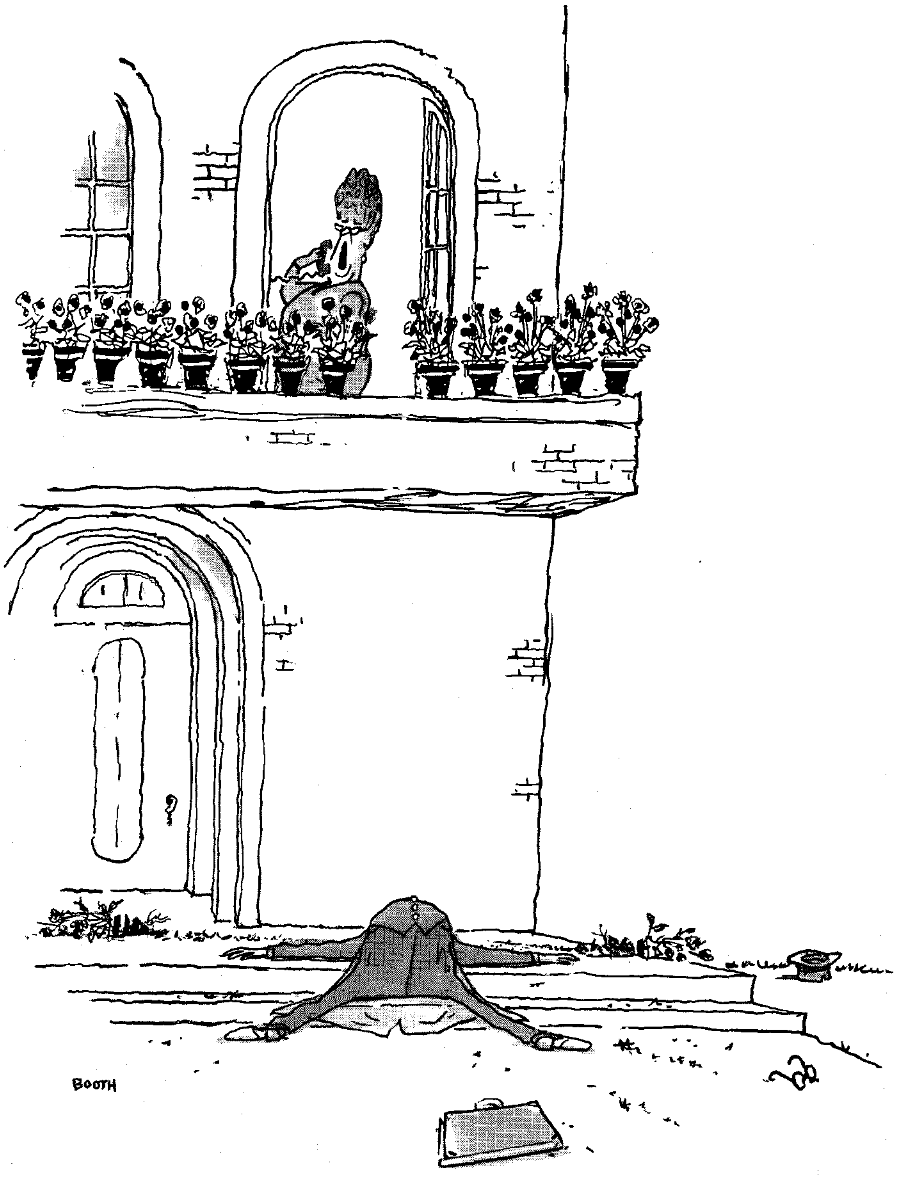
Later that spring, Carpenter called in Nancy Evans to consult with A.O.L. about starting an on-line magazine that would help subscribers learn how to use the Net. Evans, a friend of Carpenter's, was a well-known publishing executive. She had been a columnist for *Glamour*, the editor-in-chief of the Book-of-the-Month Club, the president and publisher of Doubleday, and a founder, with Jann Wenner, of the magazine *Family Life*. Along the way, she had developed a reputation for having good ideas and high editorial standards. She was equally well known for micromanaging her harried employees and for refusing even to speak to those who displeased her—a treatment that some at Doubleday referred to as "the freeze-out." Evans was eventually fired. "Nancy's terrific," Wenner told me, but he noted that she tended to become "overinvolved in all the minutiae." As a result, he said, "you get high-quality work, but you get pretty frazzled doing it." Wenner decided to sell *Family Life* in

1995, so when Carpenter called Evans she was again out of a job.

At A.O.L., Carpenter, Evans, and Levitan began discussing ideas for a new on-line venture. Off-line marketers had long agreed that people worried most about three things: family, health, and career. Carpenter and Evans, both mothers, believed that their first site should be for parents. Levitan agreed, and soon found himself using his new laptop to write a business plan. "I was thinking, What a wonderful world, and what a lucky guy I was," said Levitan, who has dark, youthful looks and a soft, adolescent voice. "The sense of possibility is what overtook me."

In the summer of 1995—the summer that Netscape went public and kicked off a frenzy of Internet investment—Carpenter, Evans, and Levitan rented temporary offices on Fifteenth Street and chose a corporate name. Carpenter loved the word "village," for its evocation of a village green. Levitan proposed adding the "i," for interactive. For the site itself, Carpenter wanted a name that captured both the paradox and the community of parenthood, Levitan said. The result was "Parent Soup."

At the time, iVillage was proposing something daring. It sought to harness the community energy of the Web to produce a for-profit business by selling products and advertising. Carpenter took the business plan to A.O.L.'s Leonsis, who had begun seeding new Internet companies through his "Greenhouse" program. He offered to invest a million dollars. But Carpenter wanted a bigger commitment than he had made to other startups. She asked for two million, and got it, although Leonsis did express one reservation. He told Carpenter, mostly joking, "I think you're too old."



"This is Mrs. Burlington Wells. One of my begonias went off by accident and killed Mr. Goodrich."

INSTEAD, she was too early. iVillage quickly discovered that the on-line audience was still far too small to support product sales, or E-commerce. Carpenter continued to believe that sales would eventually be an important source of revenue, but she temporarily changed strategy, to emphasize advertising revenue. What she had in mind, however, was not just the rectangular "banner" ads that had begun appearing at the top of Web-site pages throughout the Internet. Instead, iVillage proposed giving sponsors a greater role in content, which the company hoped would entice them to sign contracts for longer terms and greater amounts of money. Carpenter's initial goal was to secure six of these integrated sponsorships at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars apiece. She dispatched Levitan to recruit them.

At the time, most of the companies Levitan approached had no idea what an on-line advertisement might look like. "Frankly, the company should have gone out of business," said Dan Ambrose, a media consultant who was hired to help guide Levitan. It was only through "masterly salesmanship," Ambrose told me, that Levitan was able to secure half a million dollars in commitments from five major corporations: Toyota, Nissan, M-G-M, Starbucks, and Polaroid. In this phase of the startup, Levitan was the company's "rainmaker," according to one of iVillage's early investors. But Carpenter told me that she and Evans saw him as "kind of a junior partner, which he always felt was unfair." Their styles clashed. Carpenter and Evans had private offices. Levitan, a decade younger, preferred to work among the junior staff, many of whom adored him.

iVillage's initial seed money ran out in April, 1996, just a few months after the company launched "Parent Soup." Its highest-paid employees skipped a paycheck, and Carpenter and Evans used their checking accounts to cover the rest of the payroll. A.O.L. lent the company another half million dollars. In May, iVillage received a crucial infusion of twelve million dollars from several investors, including the prestigious Silicon Valley venture-capital firm of Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

Carpenter had courted Kleiner not so much for the money—although iVillage clearly needed it—as for the prestige that its investment would confer on the company, and on her. The firm, headquartered in Menlo Park, has a reputation for picking big winners, from A.O.L. to Amazon, so its investment in a new company greatly reassures other investors.

Initially, Kleiner had had little interest in iVillage. It had focussed its Internet investments mainly on bedrock companies, which produced search engines or provided access to the Net. But Carpenter was persistent, and Kleiner "wanted to deepen our relationship with A.O.L.," said Will Hearst, one of the firm's partners. Eventually, Kleiner invested in iVillage because "it was something that A.O.L. had committed to." With Kleiner's cash and good name, iVillage won the attention of Habib Kairouz, the managing director of the investment firm Rho Management, who soon agreed to help recruit investors for a "private placement" that brought iVillage $20.5 million, and who later became a member of the company's board of directors.

Kairouz, who was born in Lebanon, is thirty-three years old, and works out of offices on the forty-third floor of the General Motors Building, with unobstructed views north over Central Park. Kleiner's investment, he told me, meant "I didn't need to look into Candice's background to see if she was a crook." Even so, his firm spent a month scrutinizing the company, debriefing advertisers, assessing the underlying technology, and evaluating management. Kairouz was impressed with iVillage's ability to attract and hold a large community of users—to "aggregate" an audience, in Net jargon. Audience was real estate, and whoever secured the most real estate first was bound to win. He wasn't put off by the company's reputation for ripping through cash. "We're very strong believers that the Internet is a race, and you have to move very quickly to establish the brand and ramp up the traffic," he told me.

Kairouz was concerned, however, over whether Carpenter had assembled a management team capable of building the company. "Candice came across as very aggressive, somebody who can get there, but not necessarily somebody who can get there by dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's every step of the way," he said. "She needed strong lieutenants who pulled the reins every now and then—somebody to force people to stick to their budgets." At the time, iVillage had no permanent chief financial officer, no chief technology officer, and—Levitan aside—no seasoned advertising executive. Carpenter agreed with Kairouz's assessment and assured him she was already building such a team.

But recruiting did not go smoothly. In September, 1997, iVillage hired Joanne O'Rourke Hindman to become C.F.O. Four months later, Carpenter fired her. "I'm not sure where it failed," Kairouz said. "You always have very good people joining organizations, but they don't fit. She simply didn't fit."

A succession of advertising executives came and went before Carpenter finally hired an executive she believed to have impeccable credentials: Steve Carter, the head of sales for NBC's cable operations, who joined the company as the executive vice-president of sponsorships. After ten months, she fired him, too. "He just didn't get his hands around the Internet," Kairouz said. "And at the end of the day, what happened is we missed our numbers."

Meanwhile, costs kept going up. Large, commercial Web sites are expensive to create, and even more expensive to sustain. Once they are up and running, their content must be continually refreshed. Also, iVillage struck costly deals with other major Web sites, search engines, and portals, paying them a fee to steer visitors to iVillage. The $20.5 million was already going quickly when Carpenter proposed another major shift in strategy.

By the summer of 1997, iVillage was operating four channels, including its flagship site, "Parent Soup." Each channel was a distinct Web site and was linked only by common parentage. To brand a Web site, Carpenter knew, was an expensive proposition. To create compelling brand identities for four sites now seemed untenable. She knew also that women, who were finally coming on-line, made up more than seventy per cent of the company's audience. iVillage, she resolved, would officially become a women's site and link all its channels under a single umbrella brand, iVillage.com. At the time, this shift was considered risky, if not foolhardy. "Today," Carpenter told me, "the women's market on the Internet is considered one of the ground-zero places to be. I can't tell you how not true this was a year and a half ago." Similarly, advertising a Web site on television, now a common practice, was novel in 1997, when Carpenter began planning the company's first on-air campaign. But this repositioning was expensive, and by the end of 1997 the company again was running low on cash. Carpenter needed another private placement, but hoped that this would be a "mezzanine" offering—that is, the last round of financing before going public.

When it comes to raising money, an executive who can tell a good story has a huge advantage. Among Net investors, the word "story" is fast replacing the term "business plan," as if hard numerical reality were being supplanted by art. Tom Mahoney, who at that time worked at Deutsche Bank, led the mezzanine round. Carpenter's ability to pitch herself and her company was "mission critical," he told me. "There were other women's sites. Hearst owned HomeArts. There was women.com. There were definitely some competitors. But what set Candice's company apart was Candice." Investors placed orders for twice the equity that iVillage planned to sell. In February, 1998, the mezzanine round netted $31.5 million.

The next logical step was to go public. An I.P.O. typically lets a company raise more money than it could through private placements, and provides other benefits as well. Companies generally issue only a fraction of their total capital stock, but a rising price for those shares increases the entire net worth of the company, which allows it to make deals that closely held companies cannot afford. Finally, an I.P.O. is the carrot that allows Internet companies to attract talented employees with stock options rather than big salaries.

In bankers' parlance, anyone who is holding stock at the offering price when a company goes public is in line for "free money," since most new issues will rise in value at least temporarily. Banks compete ferociously to lead promising I.P.O.s, both because the leader gets the biggest share of the offering fees and because a successful offer is likely to lure other C.E.O.s who are intent on taking their companies public. This world has its own stars, the public-market equivalents of Kleiner, and one of the brightest is Mary Meeker, the celebrated research analyst at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, whose job is to identify compelling new ventures and to support the stocks of companies her firm has already taken public, a list that includes A.O.L. and Netscape. Not surprisingly, Carpenter made an effort to cultivate Meeker, who became for a time an unofficial adviser to iVillage. Meeker urged Carpenter, for example, to seek an alliance with a big, off-line media company—in particular, NBC. Though six investment banks were invited to compete for leadership of the iVillage I.P.O. in a so-called bake-off, Meeker believed that Carpenter had all but committed the lead to Morgan Stanley.

But in June, iVillage at last hired a chief financial officer, Craig Monaghan. He had been the treasurer of *Reader's Digest*, where he developed a close working relationship with bankers at Goldman Sachs, and he strongly recommended them to Carpenter. iVillage gave the lead to Goldman, and the second position to Credit Suisse First Boston. Meeker was furious. She and Carpenter engaged in a heated phone conversation—although both now seek to downplay the incident.

On August 10th, the bankers met to plan the iVillage offering. Participants doled out responsibilities—most important, the preparation of a prospectus and an S-1 registration to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the creation of the road show, a gruelling feature of every I.P.O., in which Carpenter would pitch the company to investors around the nation just before the offering began. Three weeks later, however, the market crashed, and "everything just stopped," Monaghan said. "It was the biggest drought in I.P.O.s in ten years."

Now iVillage faced a crisis. Once again, it was almost out of cash, but in that hostile market, Monaghan believed, it would be mad to go public. Some board members wanted to take the gamble. The company was racing to secure Internet turf, and the competition was intensifying: the Hearst Corporation, which had failed in an earlier attempt to acquire a stake in iVillage, was clearly planning to enter the women's market. "To remain No. 1," Kairouz told me, "we knew that we had to spend. America Online spent a billion dollars to become what it is today." The board voted to postpone the I.P.O. and arrange one more round of private financing. iVillage distributed additional equity, worth $32.1 million, to eager investors.

As the company grew, so did internal tensions, particularly between generations. Talented young employees were constantly going to Carpenter with their latest job offers and demanding more money. And every employee, it seemed, wanted to go out and start her own company. At first, Carpenter reacted with sympathy. "They saw their parents give and give and give and then in the end the corporation kind of screwed them anyway," she told me. "So I think their feeling is they're not going to repeat that."

Finally, Carpenter fired five young but high-ranking employees and replaced them with "grownups." She told the magazine *Fast Company*, "These young people are smart, but in some ways that can be dangerous. They're so sure they're right. So we kicked some of them out. We felt like we were being held hostage by these twentysomethings."

Within iVillage, the article caused a spike of hostility among the younger employees. Many staffers also began to resent the management style of Nancy Evans, who oversaw all content on the iVillage sites. "She freezes you out and you never even know why," one former senior iVillage manager told me, echoing earlier complaints at Doubleday. Levitan, in particular, seemed to become disenchanted with Evans, and with his position in the company. The new focus on women and Carpenter's efforts to hire another ad executive were pushing him toward the margins of iVillage.

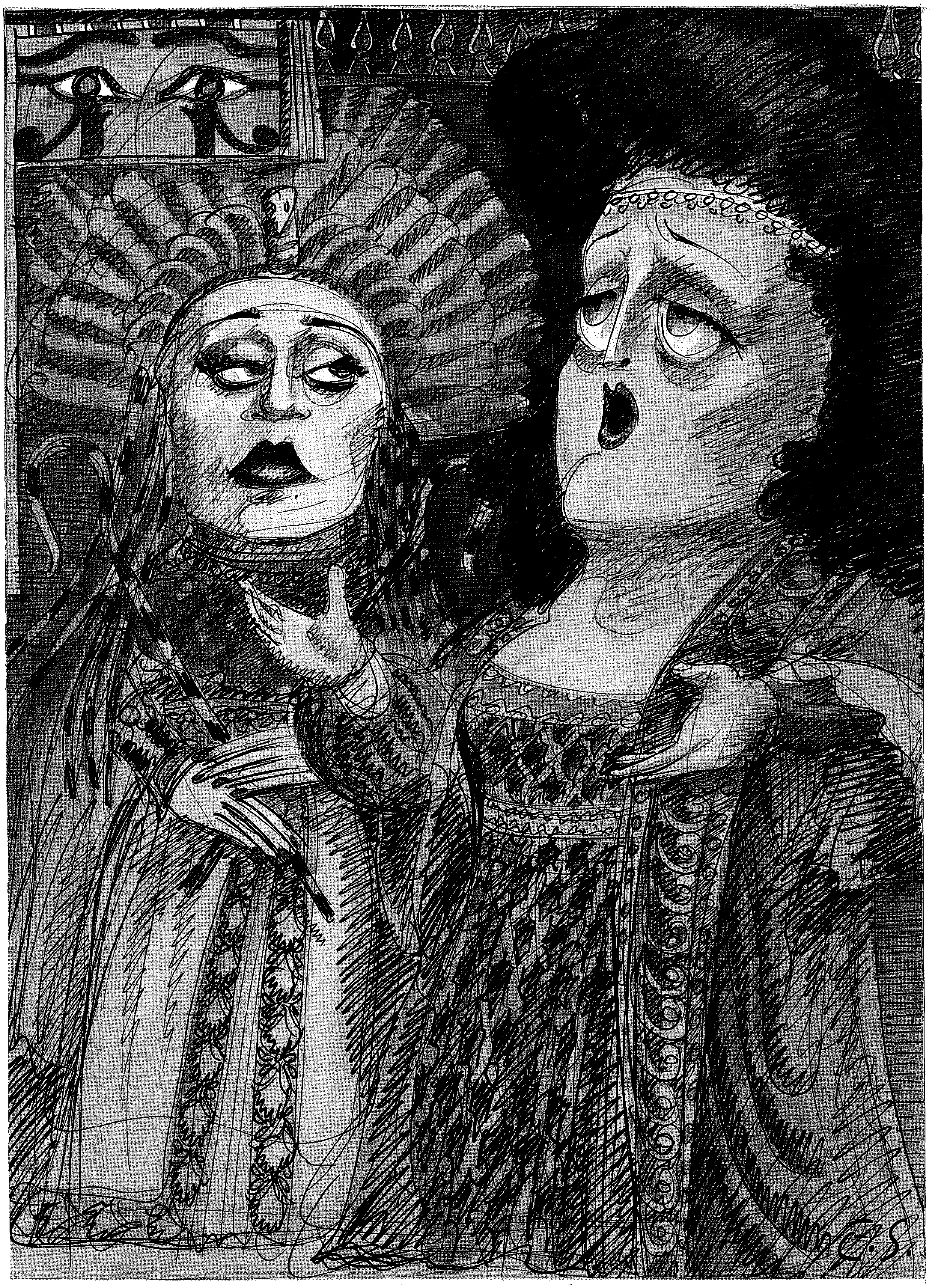
Around the time of the organizational meeting, iVillage held a retreat for about sixty managers at a resort in Connecticut. It was meant to build cohesion among the staff, but, instead, it seemed to exacerbate generational tensions. The *Fast Company* article had just come out. Carpenter left a day early, and the "kids" stayed up drinking, skinny-dipping, and playing all-night volleyball. The next morning, some overslept and missed the start of a series of games meant to build teamwork. An older executive angrily accused some young managers of not taking the games seriously. What most troubled those at the retreat, however, was the fact that Evans never showed up. For two weeks or so, she disappeared from view, with no explanation. Rumors spread that she was about to quit. Evans later explained to me that another media company had offered to buy iVillage, and she needed time to think about whether she could remain if the acquisition occurred. "It was a major fork in the road, with a big decision to make," she said. iVillage turned down the offer.

THAT winter, the markets rebounded. On December 2nd, Carpenter convened a company-wide meeting at the Toy Center, nearby on Fifth Avenue, to announce that iVillage would at last file its public offering. She announced, too, a key alliance with NBC, which would provide iVillage with millions of dollars of prime-time advertising on shows like "Friends" and "ER," in return for a combination of cash and equity. But she had other news as well: Robert Levitan was leaving. (Soon afterward, he launched an on-line gift-certificate company called Flooz.com.) When Carpenter invited Levitan onto the stage, two hundred people rose from their seats and, with cheers and applause, urged him to the podium. "I could feel the love in the room," Levitan told me. "If you're going to go, that's the way to go."

A week later, on December 11th, iVillage filed its I.P.O. registration with the S.E.C. and entered a "quiet period"—the time between the filing date and the twenty-fifth day after the stock begins trading, during which employees are forbidden to promote the company or its stock. For iVillage, this period was hardly quiet. Earlier, Geraldine Laybourne, who had turned Nickelodeon into one of the top cable-TV brands, and who had run Disney's cable operations, had announced the formation of a new women's network, Oxygen Media,

DUELLING DIVAS

Two powerhouse voices—the American soprano Deborah Voigt (right) and the Russian mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina—make beautiful war at the Met this week, in Verdi's "Aida." It's Voigt's début as the doomed Ethiopian slave (to Borodina's jealous Egyptian princess Amneris), and she's sure to go out in a blaze of vocal glory.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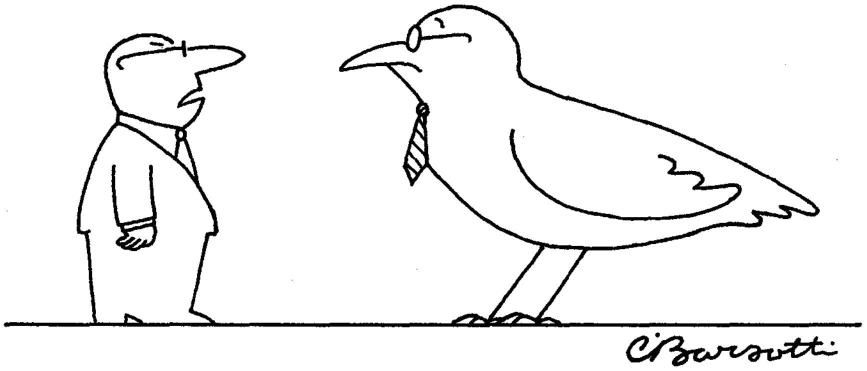


"Nonsense, I'm sure you'll have no trouble at all readjusting to life in the wild."

• •

which would include a Web site and a cable-TV channel. Now the press was awarding her victory in the race to dominate the women's "space" on the Internet. Citing three core cyber-properties she had acquired from A.O.L., and a partnership she had formed with Oprah Winfrey and Carsey-Werner, producers of "The Cosby Show" and "Roseanne," *Wired* magazine in February declared that iVillage had been "surpassed overnight by an old media superstar." Meanwhile, in January, Hearst at last acquired control of a women's Web site—women.com—and merged it with its own women's site, HomeArts, to create Women.com Networks, LLC.

In the midst of all this, a former iVillage executive named Todd Kenner filed a lawsuit that ended up in federal court, charging iVillage with fraud and breach of contract. Carpenter, he claimed, had promised him a small fortune in stock options to induce him to move to New York from Tennessee, then abruptly fired him and reneged on the promise. iVillage denied the allegations. In early March, just days before the I.P.O. took place, two other former executives—Joanne Hindman, the fired chief financial officer, and Steve Carter, the fired executive vice-president of sponsorships—made declarations in support of Kenner's lawsuit, claiming that they, too, were owed stock options. iVillage has denied these claims, as well.

During the road show for iVillage, in which Carpenter visited twenty-five cities in eleven days and made eighty presentations, she asked investors at each stop if they wanted her to address the lawsuit. According to Carpenter, none did. In fact, demand for the iVillage offering was so intense that allocating the I.P.O. shares became a ticklish matter. Early backers found themselves having to share the "free money" with new investors who had been invited to participate by Carpenter and by Goldman Sachs, which had long-standing clients to take care of. One of those early backers, Dana Callow, of Boston Millennia Partners, protested to Carpenter, although by last spring, when I spoke to him on the phone, he had become more philosophical. "You've got a deal that's very hot, it's thirty-eight times oversubscribed," he said. The challenge was to allocate shares and not alienate loyal investors and customers. "Would I like to have done more? Yes," he said. "On the other hand, the deal was managed well . . . and the outcome was achieved."

Late in the afternoon of Thursday, March 18th, after the markets closed, a committee of bankers and iVillage officials, including Carpenter and Kairouz, met in the Goldman Sachs conference room to set an offering price for the stock. Establishing this price is an art, in which several considerations come into play. The price must be high enough to raise lots of capital, but not so high that it risks an embarrassing slide on the first day of trading or fails to create the spread that delivers "free money" to inside investors. Originally, iVillage planned to go public at a price somewhere between twelve dollars and fourteen dollars a share, but in the light of the intense demand from investors, the committee set the final price at twenty-four dollars—cause for celebration. Members of the pricing committee and some two dozen iVillage employees ate cake and drank champagne in a Goldman conference room. At twenty-four dollars a share, iVillage would immediately make $91.6 million on the offering, and the banking syndicate would net $7.1 million. The timing was perfect: on the eve of the I.P.O., the Dow Jones industrial average soared to a new record.

ON Friday morning, Robert Levitan sat in front of his computer at the Times Square offices of Flooz.com. "Instant" E-mail messages from his former colleagues at iVillage began bursting on the screen. They thanked him for hiring them, and for helping to build the company. "I was a little numb about the whole thing," Levitan told me. (He would not disclose his stake in iVillage.) "You know, it was, like, pinch me, what have we done." He took a subway downtown to iVillage, and was greeted by exuberant employees, who hugged him and kissed him.

Carpenter and Evans had been invited to the Goldman Sachs offices at One New York Plaza to witness iVillage's final steps toward becoming a publicly traded company. Guided by Lawrence Calcano, a Goldman managing director, they entered the firm's vast trading floor. A hundred traders staffed the NASDAQ "desk," which now snapped with energy. The traders cracked jokes and teased the founders. "They were kind of cute, wild guys," Carpenter said.

Throughout the morning, the traders worked to establish a début price for the stock, a point of equilibrium between the price at which sellers were willing to sell and buyers willing to buy. Each trader fed his latest bid and offer prices to a senior trader, who was responsible for establishing an "orderly" market for the stock. At about noon, this trader believed that a consensus had been reached and declared a time-out—a customary fifteen-minute period during which traders make no more calls. The floor grew quiet. The time-out ended. The NASDAQ desk at Goldman exploded into life again. Suddenly, a new symbol began moving across Goldman's stock ticker: "IVIL." Carpenter and Evans held hands. "It's like watching yourself from out of your body," Carpenter said. "It is. It's hard to explain."

Even harder to explain was the first number that followed the IVIL symbol, the first price offered for the stock: $95.88. The trading floor roared again. Block after block of iVillage shares now marched across the Goldman ticker.

"We were a little stunned," Carpenter said. "We were a little disoriented, actually. It's a very surreal thing to happen." It was thrilling. It was sobering. She sought an analogy from her mountaineering past. "We were leaving the foothills and going up into the big icy mountains," she said. From here on, she knew, "everything would just get harder."

Back at iVillage, employees had been watching their computer monitors, waiting for news of that first trade. "I'll never forget when the first trade came out," said Hillary Graves, vice-president of media. "My entire floor stood up and screamed."

Carpenter and Evans remained at Goldman for half an hour, then went back uptown to the iVillage offices. On each floor, they were greeted with cheers, hugs, and wild applause. Carpenter had promised employees that this day would come. Some now told her they had not believed her. "They were just delirious," she said. "I mean, I was, like, peeling them off the ceiling. It was lovely." Carpenter told me this over breakfast at the Hotel Carlyle, near her home, and as she spoke tears suddenly welled in her eyes. Her voice wobbled. "I have this tremendous sense of, um, of having delivered to all these people." She dabbed her eyes with a Carlyle napkin. "It was a great feeling. You know, that all these people had believed in us, in our leadership, through thick and thin."

But the best moment, she said, came when she opened the door to her apartment and was greeted by her five-year-old daughter, Michaela, wide-eyed and adoring. Twenty bouquets of flowers had arrived throughout the day. Michaela understood, maybe for the first time, that her mother's long days at work had accomplished something huge.

When the markets closed that day, iVillage stock was posted at $80.13 a share, meaning that the day traders who had placed overnight orders to buy the stock at its opening price of $95.88, expecting to be rich by dinnertime, were deeply disappointed. Not so the big investors and company associates who had been able to buy at the I.P.O. price. They immediately earned free money of fifty-six dollars per share, though how many decided to cash out immediately is unknown. Carpenter, Evans, and other senior executives were bound by agreements that required them to hold on to their stock for six months. At four o'clock that afternoon, when NASDAQ trading closed, Candice Carpenter's stake—including six hundred and ninety thousand and one shares of stock, and unexercised options to buy more—was worth over eighty million dollars.

IN the six months since its I.P.O., iVillage has hired several seasoned executives and secured roughly thirty new sponsors. In what it called a breakthrough partnership with the milk industry, iVillage established a "behavior-modification program" of "weekly chats, E-mail reminders, and lively message boards" to encourage "the habit of drinking three glasses of milk per day." Its acquisition, in August, of Lamaze Publishing gave it control of a company that operates several magazines for new and impending parents, a direct-mail program, and The Newborn Channel, which broadcasts instructional information to new mothers in more than eight hundred hospitals around the country. This winter, iVillage plans to spend about twenty-eight million dollars on broadcast advertising above and beyond promotions set to air on NBC as part of their corporate alliance.

For now, Oxygen Media is less of a threat than *Wired* had predicted. Its Web site, which seems much less polished, has yet to make the Media Metrix top fifty. Instead, iVillage's toughest competitor is proving to be Hearst's Women.com Networks, which last May filed its own I.P.O., with Morgan Stanley as its lead banker and Mary Meeker as its market champion. Around that time, it launched a prime-time advertising campaign and became, briefly, the leading women's property on the Media Metrix top fifty. This did not please iVillage, which ran a full-page ad in the *Wall Street Journal* on July 29th sniffing that Women.com had taken a shortcut to prominence by combining two lesser Web sites. "There's a difference," the ad's headline stated, "between aggregating web sites and building the leading brand." In July's rankings, iVillage regained the lead.

Yet it remains unclear whether any of these sites will ever become a viable company. Given iVillage's growth and spending plans, its I.P.O. cash will not last long, and investors eventually will demand a profit, or turn against the stock. Lately, the stock market has been hard on Net companies of all kinds. It has been brutal to iVillage. Initially, the furious demand drove the price up to a hundred and thirty dollars. Since then, the stock has been in a long, fairly steady decline, and in August it hit $25.50, just a dollar and a half above the offering price. On Friday, October 1st, it closed at $34. During that slide, a lot of small investors lost money, but so did the insiders, who were locked in until September 15th. On that date, Carpenter's paper wealth was closer to forty million dollars than to eighty million. She contends, however, that such fluctuations do not trouble her. "This is the roller coaster," she told me. "And that's what I signed up to be on." ♦

SIDE EFFECTS
MStevens

FICTION

CLASS REUNION

A group of wartime reporters gather twenty years later and ask "What if?"

BY GÜNTER GRASS

THREE days on the island. Once assured that there would be rooms for rent in and around Westerland and that the hall-cum-living room would provide enough space for our group palaver, I accepted the offer of our host, who was very much one of us and had made it big in publishing, big enough to be able to afford one of those thatched-roof Frisian houses on Sylt.

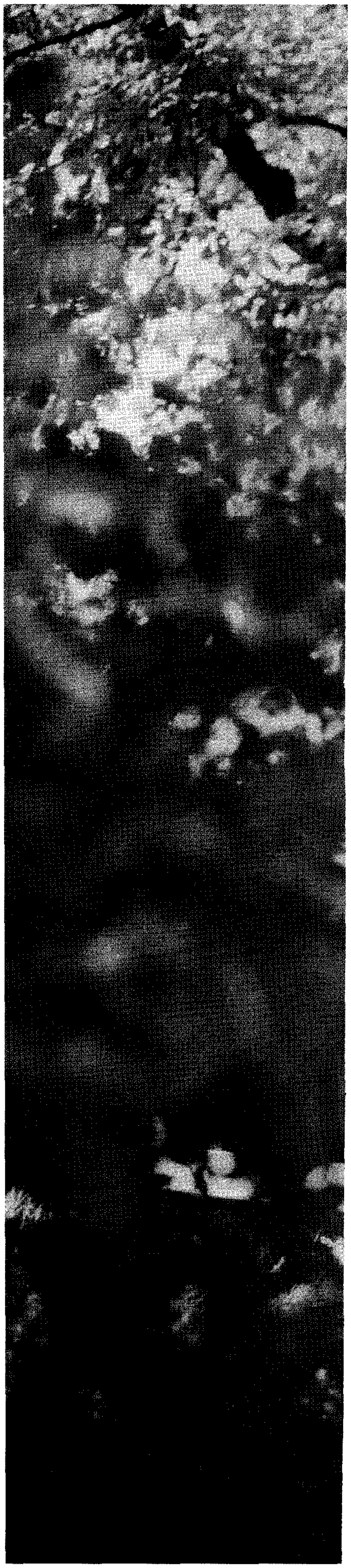
Our get-together took place in February. More than half of the potential guest list showed up, including a few big shots who run things in radio or—well, well, some things never change—the press. A few bets were made about one of them, the editor-in-chief of a high-circulation glossy, and, sure enough, there he was, though late and for a flying visit only. After the war, most of us had found jobs at small papers or magazines or gone in for freelance work. I was one of the latter. But we all bore the stigma—and stamp of quality—that came with the legend of having been war correspondents and therefore members of one or another propaganda unit, and may I take this opportunity to point out that roughly a thousand of our colleagues lost their lives flying over England in He-111 bombers, reporting from the front lines, and the like.

In any case, those of us who survived took to making more and more noise about getting together, and after some hesitation I consented to set things up. We agreed to exercise restraint: no naming of names, no personal revenge, just the kind of friendly gathering that took place shortly after the war among former holders of the Knight's Cross or members of one or another division, or inmates of a concentration camp, for that matter.

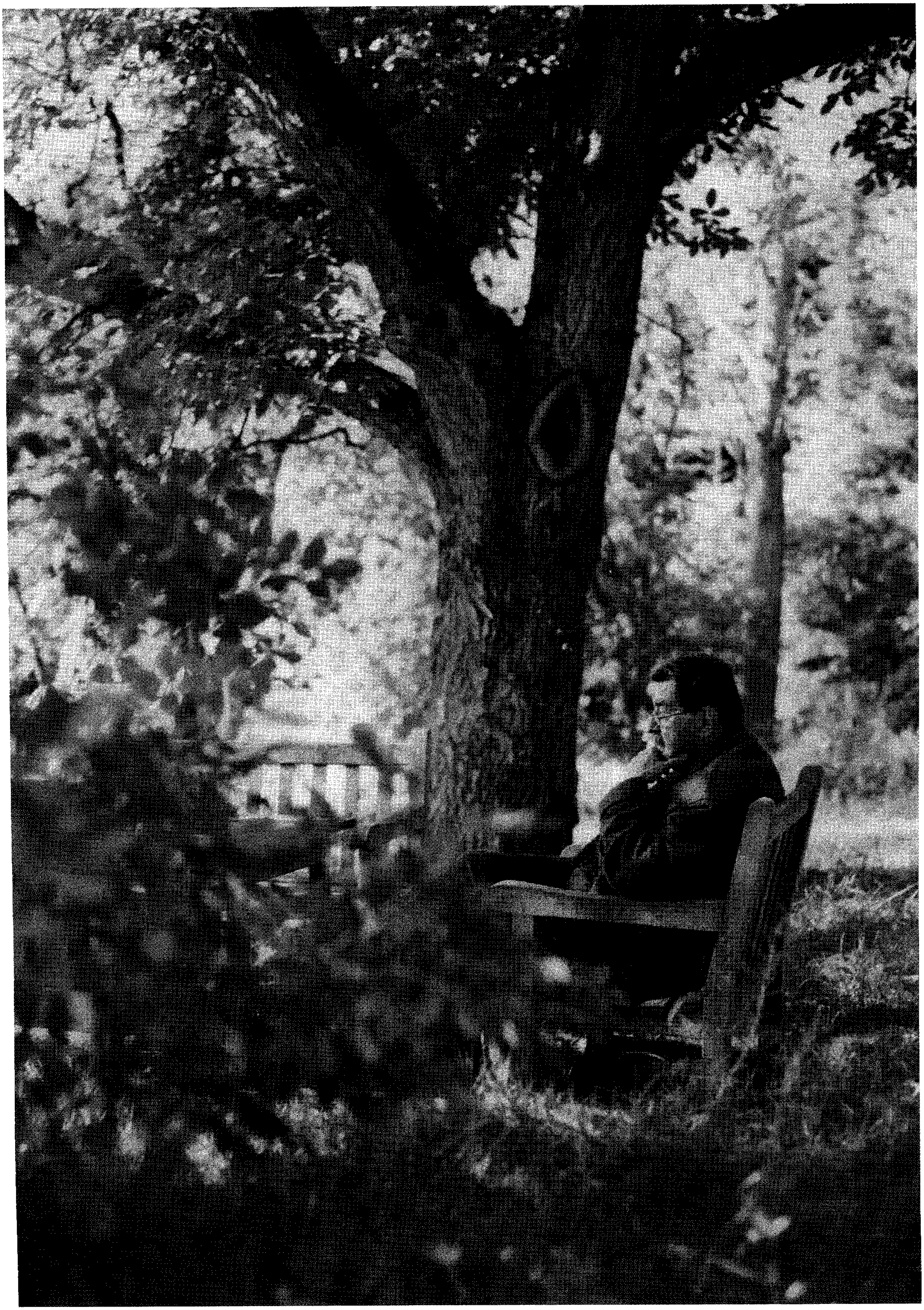
I didn't see much of Sylt. The weather limited us to short walks along the beach, and our odd assemblage of old-timers, as if still plagued with foot troubles from the days of the retreat, stuck to the fireplace, drinking and smoking and rummaging around in our memories. One recalled victories in France; another exploits in Narvik and the Norwegian fjords. We each seemed obliged to go over every article that had appeared in *Adler*, the Luftwaffe magazine, or *Signal*, a Wehrmacht publication known for its color illustrations and up-to-date layout and distributed throughout Europe. A man by the name of Schmidt had determined the course taken by *Signal;* after the war he did the same—under a pseudonym, of course—for Springer's *Kristall.* And now, having been granted the questionable pleasure of his constant presence, we were forced to listen to his sermon on what he called "platter victories."

He meant Dunkirk, for instance, to which the entire British Expeditionary Force had fled with their French allies, more than three hundred thousand men, and were waiting to be evacuated. Schmidt—his former name, the more recent one being best left unsaid—was still bursting with indignation: "If Hitler hadn't stopped Kleist's tank division at Abbeville, if he'd let Guderian's tanks and Manstein's tanks push through to the coast, if he'd given orders to scour the beaches and round up what he found, then the English would have lost their whole Army rather than a few pieces of matériel, and the war would have been over early: the Brits could never have resisted an invasion, believe me. But no, the Commander-in-Chief handed them their victory on a platter. He felt obliged to spare England, I suppose, or believed in negotiating. Believe me, if our tanks had . . ."

Thus the lamentations of the once and former Schmidt, after which he sank into a deep reverie and stared into the fire, totally uninterested in what



The author, winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Literature, in his garden, June, 1999.



UTE MAHLER/OSTKREUZ

others might have to offer by way of pincer movements and daring battle tactics. One of us, for example, who had kept his head above water during the fifties with war-story potboilers for Bastei-Lübbe and now sold his soul to those dubious publications known as the pulps, had made a splash during the war with his Luftwaffe stories for *Adler*. Today he was detailing the advantages of the Ju-88 over the Ju-87, a.k.a. the Stuka, using his hands to show the way it dropped its bombs at the end of a nosedive and served as its own targeting device by letting them go just before starting to climb. He managed to demonstrate serial bombing by closed formations so convincingly—making use of Hitler's expression "rub out," for example—that we could all relive the period of the reprisals, the terror attacks on Lübeck, Cologne, Hamburg, and Berlin.

After that the energy around the fire threatened to flag, and the group resorted to the usual sort of trade gossip: which publisher had ousted which editor-in-chief, whose job was in jeopardy, how much Springer or Augstein paid this or that reporter. We were finally rescued by our art-and-submarine expert, who went on in an appropriately colorful style about Expressionism and the paintings he'd managed to hoard, and frightened us with sudden booming cries like "Ready to dive!" Soon we thought we were hearing depth bombs. "Sonar contact, sixty degrees!" Then, "Periscope, mark bearing." And only then did we spy the danger: "Destroyer starboard." What a relief to be nice and dry, with gusts of wind serving only as background music.

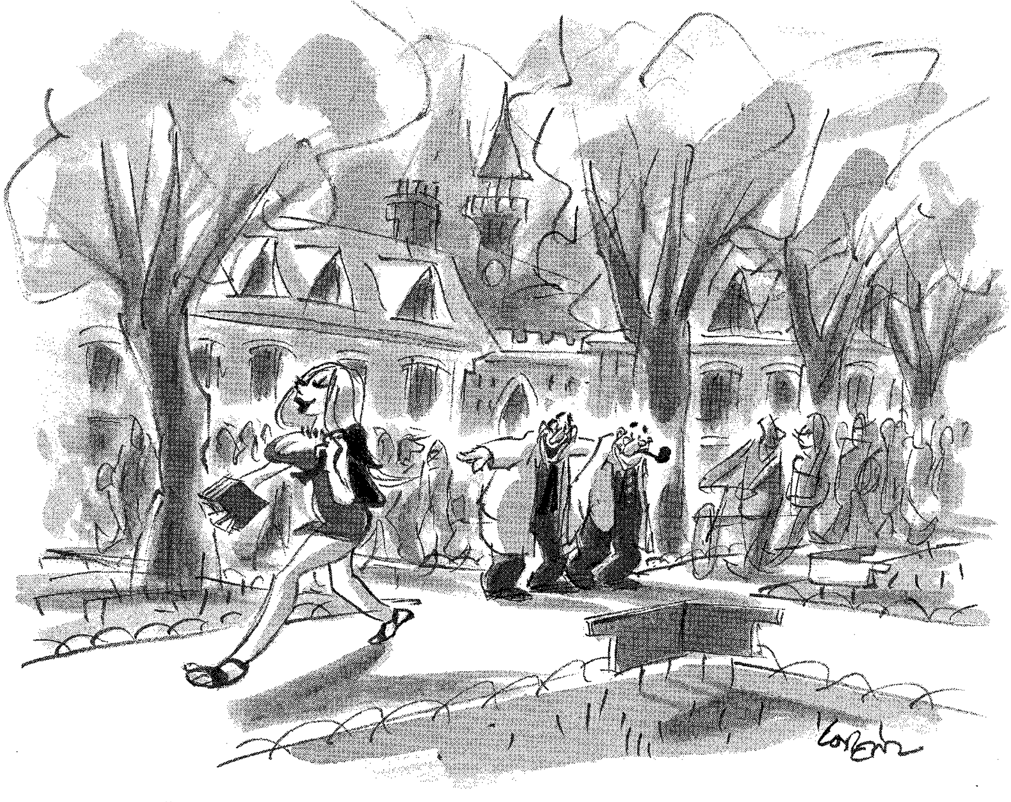
In the course of my work as a correspondent in Russia and later in Indochina and Algeria—war never stops for us—I rarely had anything sensational to report. In the Polish and French campaigns and then in the Ukraine I spent most of my time with infantry units behind the tanks in one battle of encirclement after another, from Kiev to Smolensk, and later, when the mud season set in, with an engineering division that laid log roads for supplies and reinforcements and did general repair work. Combat-boot prose, footcloth prose. My colleagues were much more vainglorious and eloquent. One of them, who later—much later—sent articles from Israel to our mass-circulation tabloid about "blitz victories," as if the Six-Day War were a continuation of the Barbarossa campaign, boasted of having jumped over Crete with our paratroopers in May of '41 ("Max Schmeling hurt his knee"); another, on the cruiser Prinz Eugen, had watched the Bismarck sink the British battleship Hood three days before *it* sank with its two-thousand-man crew: "And if an aerial torpedo hadn't hit the rudder and knocked her out of commission, the Bismarck might well be afloat today. . . ."

There were all kinds of "what if" stories. They were the basis for the millions our fireside strategist Schmidt made from the *Kristall* series he turned into a tome, a blockbuster, for Ullstein. His latest discovery was that the Balkan campaign cost us our victory over the Russians: "Only because a Serb general by the name of Simović led a coup in Belgrade did we have to clean up down there, and that took four costly weeks. What if our armies had been able to start their push east on May 22nd instead of June 22nd, if General Guderian's tanks had been positioned for the final attack on Moscow before November 15th, four weeks before, before the mud hit and Father Frost took over . . ."

And on he went, gazing blindly at the fire, about "platter victories," winning battle after battle after the fact. (Stalingrad and El Alamein were next.) No one supported his speculations, but none of us, including me, dared to contradict him: there were two or three other dyed-in-the-wool Nazis in our presence, editors-in-chief then as now and highly influential in our circle. Who is willing to bite the hand that feeds him?

Finally I escaped the HQ backroom atmosphere with an old pal, who, like me, had reported from the standpoint of the common soldier, and we made fun of the "what if" philosophy in a local pub. We'd known one another since February, 1941, when the two of us—he a photographer, I a cub reporter—received our orders to accompany Rommel's Afrika Korps to Libya. His pictures of the desert and my reports of the recapture of Cyrenaica made a big splash in *Signal*. Now we sat at the bar reminiscing and pouring schnapps after schnapps down our gullets.

Pretty far gone, we walked



"Good Lord, Professor! There it goes—the theory of everything!"

A NIGHT IN TOLUNA

Always that knocking
at the iron door,
and that voice whispering
What if I open?

Silence again.
A raindrop in the courtyard.
The gurgle of the pump.

A hen rustling
her dusty feathers
in a sleep I can't share.

Then the pounding,
terrified but also
as if there were no one—

just moonlight
and the granite road
climbing to Bolivia.

Soon I'll hear the heavy bolt
being drawn back,
the moan of the hinge,
and the dog barking incredulously.

It will be day, and never again
will I dream I saw your face.

—D. Nurkse

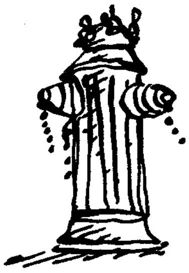
along the Westerland beach promenade into the wind. For a while we sang "Hurrah for the storm and the thundering waves"; then we just stood and stared mutely out at the sea. When we started up again, I tried my hand at a parody of the former Herr Schmidt: "Think what would have happened if Churchill had changed his mind early in the First World War and landed on Sylt with three divisions. Wouldn't things have come to an end a lot sooner? Wouldn't history have taken a completely different turn? No Adolf and the dirty mess that came after. No barbed wire, no wall down the middle. We'd still have a kaiser and even a colony or two. . . ."

We gathered the next morning in dribs and drabs. The sun had poked a few holes in the cloud cover, making a stroll in the direction of Keitum possible, but in our meeting room, whose rustic timberwork projected a solidity that would last for centuries, the fire was burning again—or burning still—and our host kept filling our cups with tea poured from bulbous china cannisters. The talks were muted, even when about current events, and it took patience to pick out the references to the Volkhov encirclement, the Leningrad siege, and the Arctic Sea front. But slowly things turned critical: one correspondent had had the frozen soldiers cut from his dispatches; another the absence of replacement troops at Rostov. It was then, during a chance pause, that I spoke up.

Until that point I'd refrained from putting myself forward. The bigwig editors may have intimidated me a bit. But since they and the art-and-submarine expert hadn't drifted in yet (they'd probably found themselves a more attractive audience in the posh communities on Sylt), I seized the opportunity and said, or, rather, stuttered—I am more at home with the written word—my piece. "I'd made my way from Sevastopol to Cologne for a home furlough. I was staying with my sister near the Neumarkt. Things looked more or less peaceful, almost as before. I went to my dentist and had him drill one of my left molars. I was supposed to go back two days later and have it filled. It was not to be. In the night between the thirtieth and thirty-first of May . . . A full moon . . . Like a hammer . . . More than a thousand Royal Air Force bombers, raking our flak with gunfire. Then streams of firebombs, high-explosive bombs, aerial bombs, phosphorous cannisters, right over the center of town. But the outlying areas, too. Deutz and Mülheim on the other side of the Rhine . . . Carpet bombing, no targets. Whole districts in flames . . . Only roof fires where we were, but you should have seen what went on next door, things you can't imagine . . . I helped two old women in the apartment above ours. The curtains and both beds had caught fire. No sooner did I put the fire out than one of the women asked me, 'Who's going to find us a cleaning lady?' But it's not something words can tell. . . . People buried alive. Charred corpses. I can still see the tram wires along Friesenstrasse strewn over the smoking rubble like streamers at Carnival. And Breitestrasse's four huge office buildings—reduced to steel skeletons. The Agrippa Building, with its two cinemas—burned to the ground. The Café Wien, on the Ring, where I used to take Hildchen, now my wife—gone. The upper floors of Police Headquarters—gone. And St. Aposteln—it might have been split with an axe. The cathedral was still standing, smoking but standing, while everything around it, even the bridge to Deutz . . . The building where my dentist had his practice—it simply was no more. Apart from Lübeck, Cologne was the first terror attack. I know: we started it all with Rotterdam and Coventry, if you leave out Warsaw, that is. But a thousand bombers, including seventy or so four-engine Lancasters . . . True, our flak brought down more than forty of them. But they just kept coming. It took four days to get the trains running. I cut my furlough short. Even though my tooth had started acting up again. I wanted to get back to the front. There at least I knew what was what.

I bawled—broke down and bawled—when I saw my Cologne from Deutz. Everything in smoke. . . . Only the cathedral still standing. . . .”

They listened to me, which doesn’t happen often, and not only because I’m more at home with the written word. This time your humble servant had set the tone. Others started in about Darmstadt and Würzburg, Nuremberg, Heilbronn, and so on. And Berlin, of course, and Hamburg. Rubble heaps all. The same stories over and over. But it’s not something words can tell.



At about noon, when our ranks had filled out somewhat, we moved on to Stalingrad, and from then on it was Stalingrad and only Stalingrad, though none of us had been in the encirclement. Lucky bastards that we were.

Even though our godfather of a host made a point of leaving us to our own devices, he did see to it that our palaver followed more or less the sequence of events, which meant that after Stalingrad and El Alamein all we could talk about was retreat or, as it was called at the time, “front straightening.” Most of us had had trouble writing, not because the censors cut or rewrote our copy but because it was a lot easier to give a stirring account of convoy ships being destroyed in the Atlantic or the victory parade along the Champs-Elysées than of chilblain, the evacuation of the Donets basin, or the capitulation of the Afrika Korps in Tunis. The defense of Monte Cassino offered a modicum of heroic material. “Granted, the liberation of Il Duce could be turned into a feat of sorts, but what else?” So we considered it embarrassing—if not downright out of place—when yet another of our number reported on the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto and tried to make the massacre look like a victory.

He hadn’t opened his mouth before, this plump little man decked out in loden—I later learned that he delighted amateur hunters with brilliant animal stills and illustrated safari features—but he’d been there with his Leica in May of ’43, when more than fifty thousand Jews were liquidated by artillery fire and flamethrowers in the walled district. The ghetto later disappeared almost without a trace.

He’d been posted there as a member of a Wehrmacht propaganda unit: only for the length of the campaign. On the side—during his free time, that is—he had put together three copies of an album bound in grained leather: one for the Reichsführer of the S.S., Himmler; one for the commander of the S.S. and the police in Kraków, Krüger; one for the Warsaw commander, S.S. Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop. It eventually surfaced as the “Stroop Report” at the Nuremberg Trials.

“I shot in the neighborhood of six hundred pictures,” he said, “though only fifty-four went into the album. All neatly mounted on Bristol board. A quiet, precise kind of work. But the handwritten captions are only partly my doing. Stroop’s aide-de-camp, Kaleske, talked me into them. And the text on the front page in Gothic script—‘There is no more Jewish District in Warsaw’—came from Stroop himself. At first it was only a matter of evacuating the ghetto, ostensibly to prevent the outbreak of an epidemic. So I wrote ‘Out of the factories!’ in my best calligraphy. But our men met with opposition—poorly armed boys, some women, too, and members of the infamous Halutz movement. So in went the Waffen S.S. and a company of engineers with flamethrowers and also a group of volunteers from Travnik—Latvians, Lithuanians, and Poles. We had our losses, you can be sure, but I didn’t go around snapping them. I steered clear of corpses altogether. More group shots. One of the pictures that later became famous I called ‘Pulled from the Bunkers by Force’; another one, just as famous, ‘To the Transfer Point.’ They all went to the loading ramp. And from there to Treblinka. That’s when I first heard the name Treblinka. Around three hundred thousand were packed off there. But I have pictures with no captions, too, pictures that speak for themselves. One is pretty funny—our men having a friendly chat with a group of rabbis. But the one that became world famous after the war showed a group of women and children with their hands up and our men, on the right and in the background, pointing their guns at them. And a nice little Jewish kid out in front. In knee socks. With a peaked cap sliding off his head. You’ve seen it, I’m sure. It’s everywhere. It’s been reproduced thousands of times. All over the world. Even book covers. Made a real cult figure out of the kid. And not a word of credit to the photographer. Not a penny have I earned, not a single measly mark. Forget the copyright convention. Forget royalties. But I once estimated that if I’d got fifty marks each time it came out, I’d have chalked up . . . No, never fired a shot. And always out in front. You remember. . . . Nothing but pictures. And the handwritten captions, of course. Old-fashioned, in the German script. Crucial documents, anyone will tell you. . . .”

On he went, long after people had stopped listening. Meanwhile, the weather had cleared, and everyone felt in need of fresh air, so we risked a stroll—some in groups, others alone—though the wind was still strong. Across the dunes. I’d promised to bring my son back some shells. And I did.

Sooner or later there had to be a showdown. Not that there was something in the air. It’s just that this sort of get-together brings it on. When all we could talk about was retreat—“Kiev and Lwow in enemy hands, Ivan marching on Warsaw”—when the Nettuno front caved in, Rome fell without a battle, and the Normandy invasion made a mockery of the impregnable Atlantic Wall, when one city after another was bombed to bits and there was nothing left to eat, when the reaction to the “Steal No Coal” and “Even the Walls Have Ears” posters was reduced to a bemused smile at best, when most of us veteran reporters had sunk into “hold out” jokes, somebody—one of those propaganda-campaign types who’d never seen action, who’d sat out the war in a cushy office job and gone on to churn out best-sellers in an only slightly modified diction—pulled the phrase “miracle weapon” out of his sleeve.

There was an immediate and raucous outcry. The big boss of the country’s leading magazine shouted, “Don’t be ridiculous!” Some even booed. But the man in question, now well on in years, refused to be daunted. He smiled provocatively and predicted a great future for the “Hitler myth.” Calling on Charles the Saxon-Slayer, Frederick the Great, of course, and—who else?—“that predator of a Napoleon” as his witnesses, he constructed a monument to the “Führer principle” to come. Not one word of the "miracle weapon" article that appeared in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in the summer of '44, caused a sensation, and, let's face it, reinforced the nation's will to hold out—not one word did he repudiate.

And here he was standing with his back to the fire, stiff as a ramrod. "Who had the vision to show Europe the way? Who rescued Europe by stemming the tide of the Bolshevik flood? Who made the first, pioneering step on the path from guided weapons to carrier systems for atomic warheads? He and he alone. He alone has the grandeur to stand up to history. As for my article in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, let me ask all those gathered here: Are we not needed again as soldiers, be it only in our own mockery of an army? Are we not both spearhead and bulwark? Is it not clear by now that Germany actually won the war? The world looks on with envy and admiration as we make our comeback. After total defeat our inexhaustible energy is generating economic strength. We are 'somebody' again. Soon we shall be back in the forefront. Japan, having enjoyed similar successes . . ."

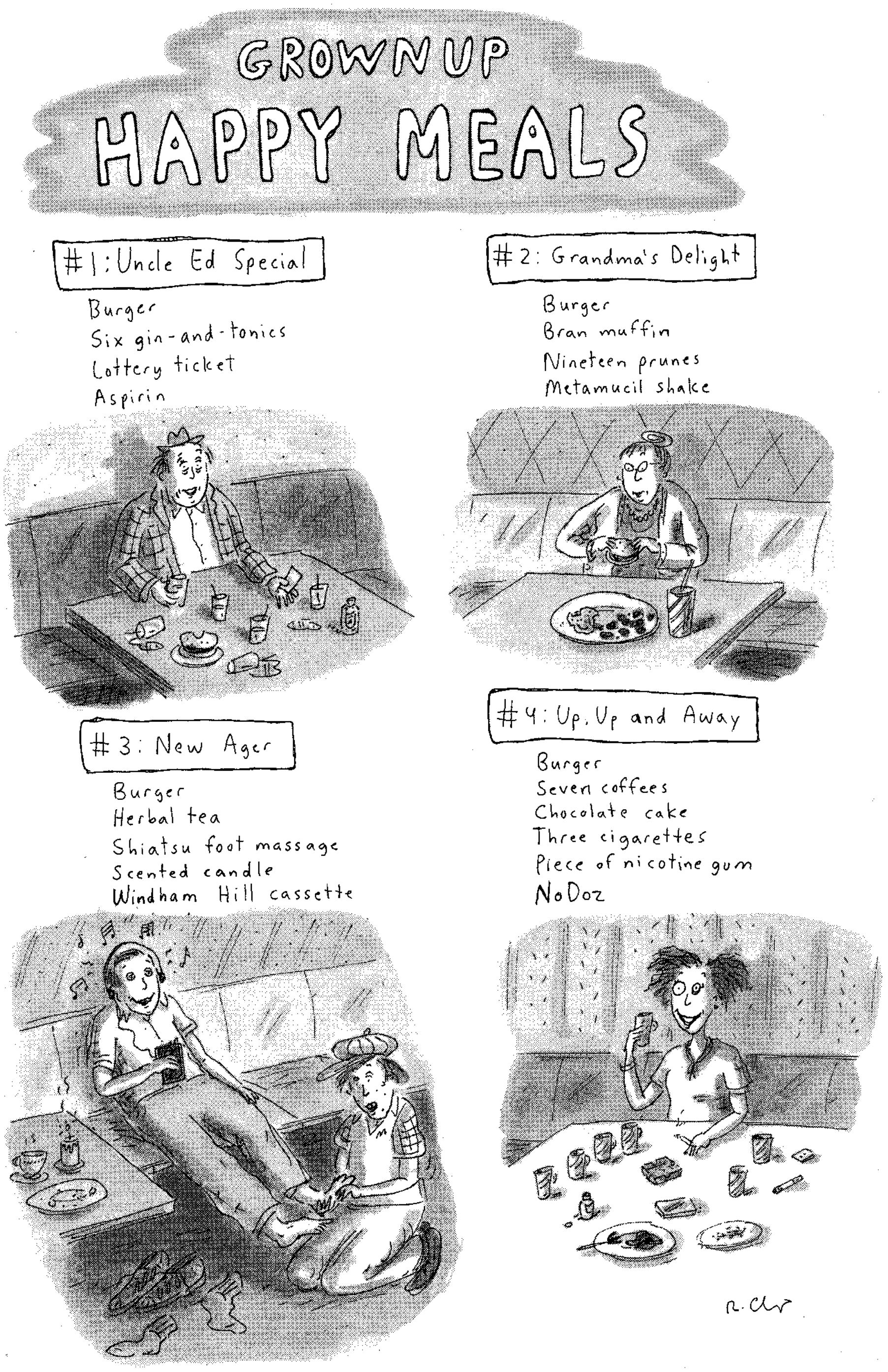
The rest was lost in roars, guffaws, arguments, and counterarguments. Someone shouted "*Deutschland über alles!*" in his face, thereby plugging his eponymous longtime best-seller. The big boss removed his hulking presence from our midst by way of protest. But the orator was overjoyed at the effect of his provocation and took his seat with as seerlike a gaze as he could muster.

Our host and I tried in vain to bring the discussion back on track. Some insisted on rehearsing more retreats, the encirclement disaster at Minsk, for instance; others started rehashing the attempt on Hitler's life ("Had it worked, an armistice with the Allies would have stabilized the eastern front and made a common campaign, the Yanks and us, against Ivan something of a . . ."), but most bemoaned the loss of France, recalling the good times they'd had in Paris and the superiority of the French way of life, and were so far removed from the Battle of Normandy that I had the feeling they'd learned of the Allied landings on the beaches from American wide-screen extravaganzas years after the fact. Of course, some regaled us with their sexual exploits—our art-and-submarine expert, for instance, who lamented his French harbor bride only to switch back to secret missions and navigable depths.

The old fogey so enamored of the "Hitler myth" felt the need to remind us that a German had been awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for 1944. His pronouncement came from the fireplace, where he appeared to have dozed off. "That, gentlemen, must have been shortly after Aachen had fallen and only days before our last offensive, in the Ardennes. Yes, neutral Sweden honored the great German scientist Otto Hahn for his work on splitting the atom. Too late for us, of course. But had we been able to beat America to the punch, had we been able to develop so crucial a miracle weapon . . ."

No uproar this time. Everyone just sat there, deep in thought over the consequences of a missed opportunity. Sighs. Heads shaking. Throats clearing with no weighty statements forthcoming. Even our submarine man, a hail-fellow-well-met with a stentorian bent, ceased spinning his yarns.

But then our host proposed a round of Frisian grog, and lifting our glasses lifted our spirits and brought us to-



"I lost everything in the Beanie Baby crash of '99."

• •

gether. No one felt like venturing into the early night. Bad weather was forecast.

ACCORDING to our host, there was a low-pressure area moving from Iceland in the direction of Sweden. He'd been listening to the weather reports. The barometer was dropping rapidly, and there were winds with a force of 12 on the Beaufort scale. "But have no fear. This house can weather any storm."

That Friday, February 16, 1962, at eight o'clock in the evening, the sirens began to wail. It was war. The hurricane hit the island head on. Not surprisingly, the open-air theatre had an invigorating effect on some of us: our years in the theatre of war had trained us to be game for anything, at the forefront, if possible. We were still pros, myself included.

So despite our host's warnings a contingent of former war correspondents set out from what we had been assured was a safe haven. Hunched over, we made our way, crawled our way from Alt-Westerland to the beach, where we found flagpoles down, trees uprooted, thatched roofs torn asunder, benches and fences hurtling through the air, while through the spray we could feel rather than see a series of waves the size of houses ramming the west coast of the island. Later we learned what the storm tide had meant on the upper Elbe and into Hamburg, particularly the Wilhelmsburg district: a water level three and a half metres above normal, dikes breaking, not enough sandbags, more than three hundred casualties, the Army called in. A man who later became chancellor took over and kept the worst at bay.

No, there were no casualties on Sylt. But the west coast was washed back a full sixteen metres. "Land under water!" could be heard even on the lee side of the island. The rocks at Keitum were completely submerged; List and Hörnum were in danger. Trains could not pass the Hindenburg Dike.

Once the storm had abated, we took stock of the damage. We had a need to report. It was what we'd learned to do, what we knew best. But as the war drew to an end and the only things to report would have been damage and defeat, we were told to write "hold-out appeals," exhortations to stay the course. I did a piece on the East Prussian refugees and their trek from Heiligenbeil over the frozen Haff in an attempt to reach the spit called Frische Nehrung, but nobody—least of all *Signal*—would publish my tale of woe. So although I saw ships overladen with civilians, wounded soldiers, and Party bosses casting off from Danzig-Neufahrwasser, although I saw the Wilhelm Gustloff three days before she sank, not a word did I write. And when Danzig could be seen blazing far and near I wrote no heartrending elegy; I made my way to the Vistula with a few scattered soldiers and civilian refugees. And when I saw the Stutthof concentration camp evacuated and inmates who had survived the march to Nickelswalde crammed first onto barges, then into ships anchored at the mouth of the river, I wrote no horror stories, no warmed-over "Götterdämmerung." I saw it all and wrote nothing. I saw the corpses stacked and burned after the concentration camp was evacuated, I saw the empty huts taken over by refugees fleeing with bag and baggage from Elbing and Tiegenhof, but I saw no more guards. There was an influx of Polish farm laborers and occasional plundering. There was fighting as well, because the bridgehead at the mouth of the Vistula held until May.

The weather couldn't have been nicer. I lay among the pine trees, sunning myself, but could not put pen to paper, even though all sorts of people—the peasant woman from Masuren who had lost her children, a venerable couple who had made their way here with great difficulty, a Polish professor who was one of the few survivors of the camp—poured out their misery to me. Describing misery was something I hadn't been trained to do. I lacked the words. So I learned silence. I left on one of the last coast-guard ships heading west from Schiewenhorst. Despite several low-flying bomber attacks, we made it to Travemünde on May 2nd.

And now here I was among others who had made it back and who, like myself, had been trained to report advances and victories and gloss over the rest, and I, like all the others, was putting the damage down on paper with the plaints of the storm victims ringing in my ears. What else could we do? Reports were our stock-in-trade.

The following day our crowd dispersed. The big shots had left earlier for the massive beach houses of the island dignitaries. I experienced an indescribable sunset after a brisk, sunny day. Then, as soon as the trains were back in operation, I made my way home over the Hindenburg Dike. No, we never got together again.

My next report was from Algeria, where after seven years of non-stop carnage the war had abated, though it refused to end. What is peace, anyway? ♦

(Translated, from the German, by Michael Henry Heim.)

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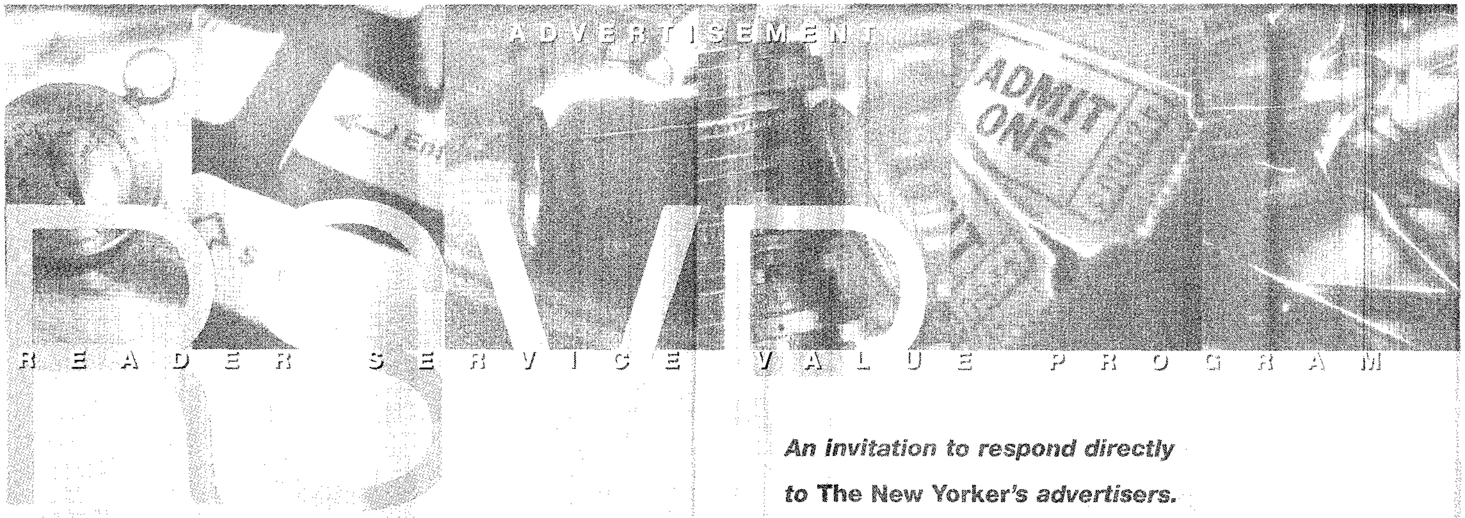

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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

TANGLED WEB

In search of Reagan's brain, starring Edmund Morris.

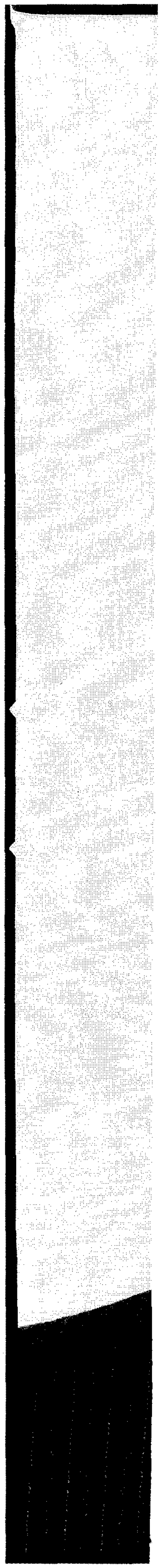
BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG

AT the appropriate point in the narrative of his new book—not quite two-thirds of the way through, when the action has advanced to 1979—Edmund Morris records, "I published an 863-page biography entitled 'The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt.'" And a very good biography it was, too. Vividly written, deeply researched, and imbued with the restless energy of its subject, it was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. Now, twenty years later, Morris is entitled to write, "I knew I had achieved something fine," adding modestly, "if only because of the fineness of the book's central character."

"The book's central character"—that would be Theodore Roosevelt. But who is the central character of Morris's new book? As we have all been hearing over the past couple of weeks, the answer to that question is far from clear. Morris appears to have sensed from the very beginning that Ronald Reagan would be a hard nut, so to speak, to crack. The Reagan White House first felt him out in 1983, after a private Valentine's Day dinner for the First Couple and a clutch of biographers at the Georgetown home of Senator Mark Hatfield. Morris, in the prologue to his book, describes how, that night, the President charmed the Woodrow Wilson scholar Arthur S. Link—whose "detestation of the Gipper was legendary"—to the point where Link, "almost sobbing with adoration," begged the Reagans to save their *billets-doux* for posterity. "Imagine what would have happened if Mrs. Wilson had burned those wonderful love letters Woodrow wrote her," Link cried. "How little we would know of his passionate humanity!" In a note to Senator Hatfield a few days later, Morris recalled Link's outburst and wrote:

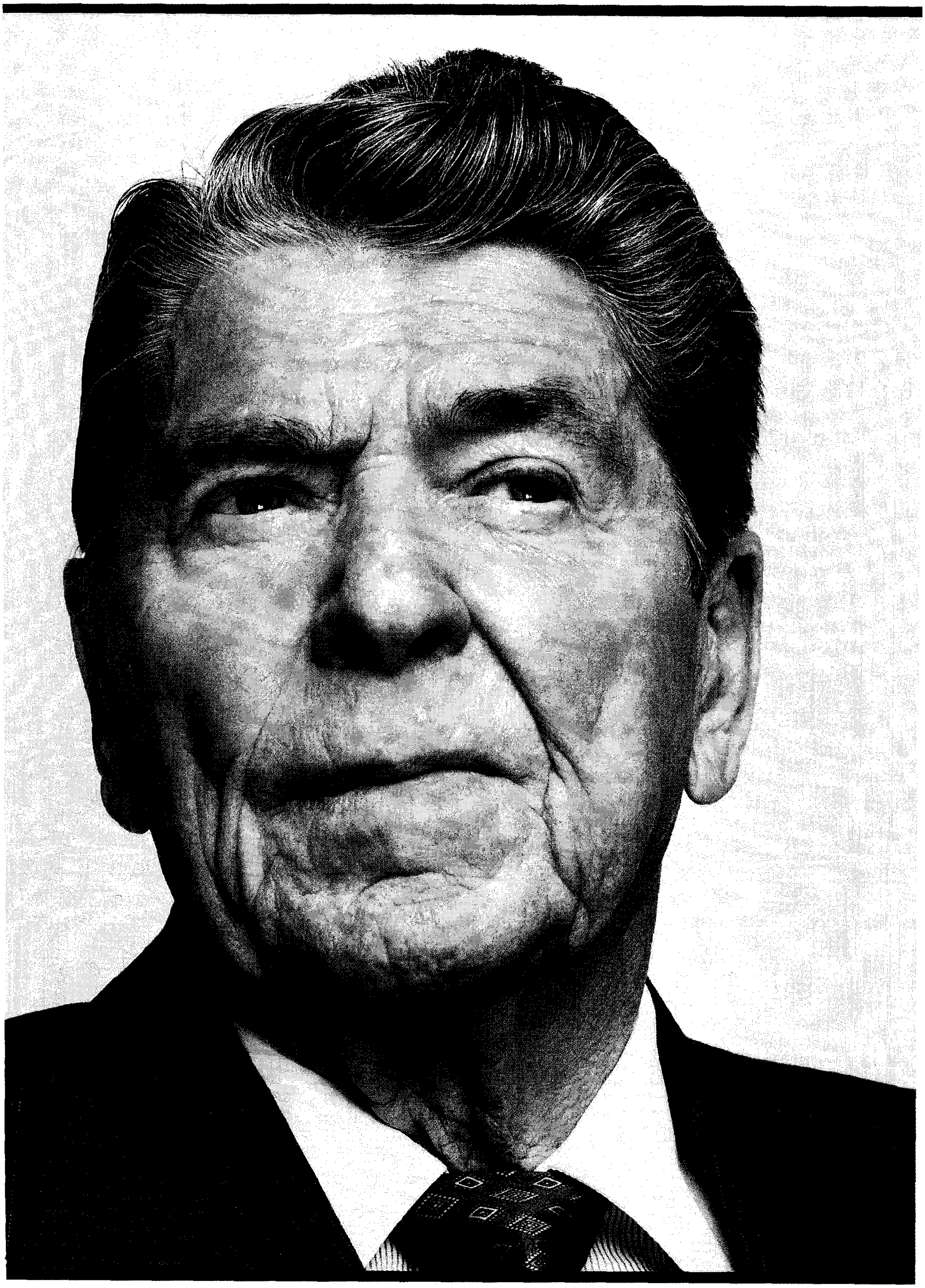
> Implicit in that remark was the suggestion that Reagan's own humanity, unchronicled, might fade faster than any other feature of his Presidency; that in the end what chiefly survives, or *should* survive, of any Chief Executive is the quality of his personality.

Nevertheless, not until two and a half years later, in the summer of 1985, did Morris finally accept the invitation—extended through Michael Deaver, the choreographer of Reagan's public image and Nancy Reagan's West Wing confidant—to become the President's official biographer. At that point, Edmund Morris set out in earnest to find Ronald Reagan—more precisely, to see what he could discover about Reagan's humanity and the quality of his personality. Now, fourteen years on, he has sent us an account of his search. He didn't find what he was looking for. At any rate, he makes no such claim. He isn't sure what he found, or if what he sought was even capable of being found. Or perhaps he is simply perplexed by what he sometimes fears, but cannot quite credit, that he



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Ronald Reagan, Los Angeles, 1993.



BRIEFLY NOTED

THE ABYSSINIAN, by Jean-Christophe Rufin; translated from the French by Willard Wood (Norton; $25.95). Rufin's first novel, which won the Prix Goncourt, is a Dumas-style romp. In 1699, in Cairo, a renowned young apothecary-cum-physician, Jean-Baptiste Poncet, accepts the leadership of a royal mission to Abyssinia in order to prove himself worthy of the resident French consul's dreamy daughter, with whom he is madly in love. Dust, intrigue, devastating partings, and joyous reunions abound; through it all the hero—to everyone's surprise but his own—manages to keep both his handsome head and his open (if infinitely complicated) heart.

SAY GOODBYE, by Lewis Shiner (St. Martin's; $23.95). This uncanny novel purports to chronicle the rise to almost-stardom of a singer-songwriter named Laurie Moss, who drives from San Antonio to L.A. in her trusty little brown Datsun looking for the big break. The details are note-perfect: the wounded titles of her songs; "the ancient musky odor of the garage" where her band plays together for the first time; the tender admissions of the narrator, a rock critic who is "at least two-thirds in love" with his subject. The completeness of the world Shiner creates brings Laurie to life, and lends a sense of fatedness to her panicked walk toward fame.

DENMARK VESEY, by David Robertson (Knopf; $23). The slave Denmark Vesey bought his freedom with his winnings from a lottery early in 1800, and for twenty-two years lived a free man, working as a carpenter in Charleston, South Carolina. But in 1822 he organized a slave revolt there whose object was to slaughter the white population and burn the town to the ground, after which the rebels planned to escape to Haiti or Africa. The plot—more ambitious than Nat Turner's or John Brown's—was betrayed before it could be carried out. At first, the slaveholders were incredulous. One master, disbelieving the accusations against one of his slaves, asked what his true intentions had been: "To kill you, rip open your belly, and throw your guts in your face" was the reply. The author is particularly skillful in showing how gaps in our knowledge are themselves evidence of the conditions of the time; for example, the record of the trial contains no description of Vesey's face—as a black man, he was denied even that elementary distinction.

A HUNDRED WHITE DAFFODILS, by Jane Kenyon (Graywolf; $23.95). This posthumous collection of translations, essays, interviews, and one unpublished poem includes Kenyon's columns for the Concord *Monitor*, and her subjects—draining the septic tank, the sounds of a nearby summer camp, the old five-and-dime—invite images of folksy, over-the-gatepost chat. Kenyon, though, writes prose the way she writes poetry, turning simple or frankly unbeautiful things sideways and inviting us to see what they offer us to love. Some of the most moving essays here chronicle her quest to make peace with Christianity, and in an introduction her husband, the poet Donald Hall, recalls a vision that left her "in a quiet, exalted, shining mood." We leave this book the same way.

THE LIGHTHOUSE STEVENSONS, by Bella Bathurst (HarperCollins; $24). The strongest character to emerge from this story of the dynasty that built lighthouses in some of the most perilous places off the coast of Scotland (and that produced Robert Louis Stevenson and bequeathed him tons of material) is Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of Louis. This early-Victorian patriarch overcame the elements of wind and wave with the elements of stone and metal and fire, and apparently enjoyed every minute of it. Bathurst describes the Stevensons' technical innovations, the ecstasy of their labors, and, in later generations, their ambivalence about joining the family firm. These lighthouse pioneers battled not only the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea but stubborn bureaucrats, professional rivals, and angry obstructionists, accustomed for generations to making their living off the wrecks.

THE HUNGRY YEARS: A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN AMERICA, by T. H. Watkins (Holt; $32.50). In 1930, a New York City truck driver lost his job when his company went bankrupt and his savings when his bank failed; the following year, a Harrisburg stonemason lost first his job and then his house. The Depression destroyed the lives of millions of hardworking, thrifty Americans and, as it deepened, revealed that many of them—textile workers, coal miners, farmers—had never shared in the prosperity of the nineteen-twenties. This humane and thorough book doesn't confine itself to Washington and Wall Street but ranges across the country to show how the Depression's victims suffered and coped, describing their strong belief in self-reliance and the inadequacy of local and private relief to mitigate the disaster. Watkins manages to find room for everything from the highly varied activities of American Communists to the environmental abuses that exacerbated the country's poverty. The national temperament he portrays—greedy and generous, callous and idealistic—bears a strong resemblance to our own today.

I HEAR THE LEAVES AND LOVE THE LIGHT, by Robert Adams (Nazraeli; $40). "We want of course to avoid sentimentality," the great Western landscape photographer writes in the preface to this paean to his little dog Sally, by which he means an "unearned emotion, emotion disproportionate to the facts." Cautioned, we enter Sally's Eden, the back yard of the Adamses' house, and bear witness to her inexplicable joys and investigations, her contemplation of the day's wash hanging out to dry. Emerging from this charmed quotidian world, we find ourselves persuaded by Adams's suggestion that the measure of what is important may include "even small lives and modest safe havens."

found: a great vacancy, a glossy head enclosing nothing at all, a huge, inert, inexplicable gravitational force in human form. The result is a very strange, very interesting, very exasperating book—a book full to bursting of both lies and honesty.

MORRIS has entitled it not "Ronald Reagan: A Biography" or "Reagan: His Life and Times" but "Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan" (Random House; $35). The title gives fair warning that something unusual is going on here. Obviously, this radically eccentric, thoroughly absorbing, sometimes quite stark-staring mad work of—what? quasi nonfiction? quasi fiction? fictionally enhanced nonfiction? metapostmodernism? autohistoriography? docudramedy?—is not the "definitive," settle-all-questions and reveal-all-secrets biographical dreadnought that Random House presumably thought it was contracting for when, fourteen years ago, it tendered Morris an advance (a reported three million dollars) that was said to be the largest in publishing history for a single book. Except for Ralph Ellison and his never-finished second novel, it's hard to think of a work in progress that has been freighted with such large and unnerving expectations.

And such impossible and superfluous ones. The life and Presidency of Ronald Reagan are among the most thoroughly documented and picked-over of modern times. Reagan's only clear superior in this respect is Richard Nixon, whose decision to tape-record everything was a stupendous gift not only to his enemies but also to its intended recipient, history. Reagan's associates have proved to be almost as graphomaniacal as Nixon's; among the seventy-two works listed in Morris's bibliography of frequently cited sources are no fewer than fifteen first-hand accounts by members of the Reagan Administration, and at least as many more have been published that he does not list. Reagan is a prominent character in the memoirs of dozens of other acquaintances, ranging from Hollywood types like Doris Day to California politicians like Edmund G. (Pat) Brown (Reagan's defeated opponent in the 1966 gubernatorial race) and diplomatic interlocutors like Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev. Reagan's movies, his rhetoric, his foreign and domestic policies—all have been monographed and memoired to death. He is the subject of at least twenty biographies, of which the most notable are Garry Wills's "Reagan's America" (1987) and the two by Lou Cannon, "Reagan" (1982) and "President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime" (1991).

Nor is our understanding of Reagan's life and work likely to undergo fundamental revision in the light of secrets as yet unrevealed. Most of the really embarrassing stuff—the Reagan-era equivalents of Nixon's arsenal of smoking guns and Kennedy's romps with Mafia girlfriends—is already out there, in some cases courtesy of Reagan's friends and relations. One of the many ways in which the Reagan Administration was unusual is that it paid the salaries of its own revisionists, some of whom did their revising in real time. The pioneer was David Stockman, Reagan's first budget director, who outlined the fraudulence of the Administration's economic program in a series of interviews with William Greider and then, after the sensational results appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, placidly kept his job for another three and a half years. Another in-house iconoclast, Donald Regan, who served as Secretary of the Treasury and then as White House chief of staff, revealed, in a memoir published before Reagan left office, that the President's schedule was often dictated by his wife's astrologer. Three of his four children—his children, no less!—have come out with books attesting to his emotional distance as a parent. The theme of Reagan's out-of-itness has been explored in a shelf of books about the Iran-Contra affair, among other places. His ignorance about nuclear weapons, his alarming natterings about Armageddon, his inability to recognize members of his own Cabinet, his failure to distinguish between movies and reality, even his promiscuity between marriages—if any of these things were ever secret, they long ago stopped being so. The difficulty of finding anything startling or revelatory to say about Reagan was wittily illustrated by a 1986 "Saturday Night Live" sketch in which Phil Hartman, as Reagan, feebly heh-hehs and head-bobs his way through an Oval Office photo op with a Girl Scout, and then, once the Girl Scout and the photographers have been ushered out, turns snarlingly on his trembling staff to instruct them on their next Iran-Contra moves in crisp, well-informed detail.

In a way, Morris's burden was lightened (though it felt no less heavy to

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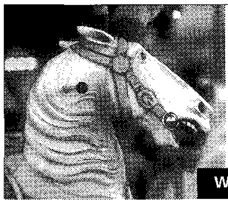

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"Do that thing where you leave."

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him) by the vastness of the existing archive. He may have missed his deadline by eight years, but even this late date is too soon for a fully definitive Reagan biography (and if and when one is written, sometime in the unforeseeable future, its author will be someone who appoints himself or herself, unofficially and enthusiastically, to the task). Until then, the two Cannon books, in their Dreiserian sprawl and meticulous chronicling, will hold the fort nicely. So it doesn't much matter that Morris was unable to write the book he envisaged.

ANYWAY, what could Morris offer, and what could be offered to him, that would enable him to add meaningfully to the already prodigious record? The answer, it must have seemed at first, was access. Morris was promised the run of the White House. He could attend meetings of the senior staff, including the regular "issues lunch" with the President; he could travel with the official party on Presidential trips abroad; he could buttonhole whatever members of Reagan's staff or family cared to make time for him; he could peruse the President's handwritten diary, a half-million words strong. Best of all, he would have a monthly session with the President himself, just the two of them, at which he could ask any questions he chose. Like no independent writer before him, he would be in a position to gain insight into the intangible human reality of a President's life.

For the most part, these promises were kept. But when the going got tough—as it did during the Iran-Contra mess, for example—the doors got closed. The White House lawyers barred him from meetings dealing with "national security and other vital policy," lest (he was told) he become a subpoena magnet. Of course, Morris could always take advantage of one of his interviews with the President to ask about something he had missed. But when he did the results were unsettling. For example, after a 1986 economic summit:

> EM: In Tokyo, on that Monday morning, was it you who took the initiative for the State Department on terrorism, or someone else?
>
> RR: The first question we were faced with was, "Why didn't you mention it in the statement?" And she was supportive and . . . they accepted it, and it was put then, and we broke for lunch at the teahouse, and as we passed, the questions there, evidently someone had seen the statement and we had added things to it, and Sam Donaldson yelled, came to me, "Why didn't you mention Qaddafi and Libya?" And [*chuckle*] I was surrounded by the rest of them! And I said, "Sam, if you haven't seen it, find a copy." It was a very pleasant walk to the teahouse!

Uh-oh.

Even when Reagan's comments scanned, however, they were hardly more enlightening. Morris, attempting to engage Reagan in a discussion of his notorious visit to the cemetery at Bitburg, with its Waffen S.S. graves, posed a question that happened to end with the word "history."

"History!" the President interjected. "That reminds me, now . . ."

> He popped on the spectacles, pulled open a drawer, and began to riffle some papers. . . . He addressed himself thus to two yellow legal sheets, laboriously filled with his own handwriting. "Those media fellows, you know, they said I got my facts wrong when I said about the New Deal borrowing some of its ideas from the Fascists and all. But I know! I was *around* in '32! I was out looking for a job! So I wrote this—uh . . ."
>
> He began to read a historical argument, convincing at least to himself. "*It is a matter of record that Franklin D. Roosevelt's liberal Cabinet officers admired Mussolini for putting together a government-controlled or Fascist-directed economy. Secretary Ickes wrote a book that expressed his desire for Fascism in America—but he called it modified Communism. . . .*"
>
> This was news to me, and, indeed, to Ickes experts. The President continued to read for several minutes, beaming at his own addled scholarship. . . .
>
> When he was through he looked at me, tapped the manuscript meaningfully, and refiled it. "I wanted to release that," he said, "but the press office here . . ." He chuckled and shook his head. "A little too strong for them."

After a year or so of this, Morris writes, "things were not going well for the Official Biographer." The O.B.'s many conversations with the President and his entourage, his closeup observations of Reagan in action in dramatic settings like summits with Gorbachev, and his researches into the pre-Presidential years are yielding plenty of colorful set pieces but nothing in the way of insights into the man's inner life. Morris is "distressed by the relentless banality, not to say incoherence, of the President's replies in interviews." He is confounded by Reagan's monumental incuriosity. When he comes to read the President's leather-bound diary, he finds that although in a way it is "coldly impressive, the work of a man who knew exactly what he believed and wanted and was not interested in anyone else's dreams," it is also

> boring enough to glaze the eyes, with its daily, dogged listing of events already printed in his schedule. Not one sentence, not even the odd stray phrase, was colored with original observation. . . . Presidents and prime ministers, Nobel laureates, monks, hunks, farmers, princes, and refugees visited the Oval Office, saying nothing memorable,

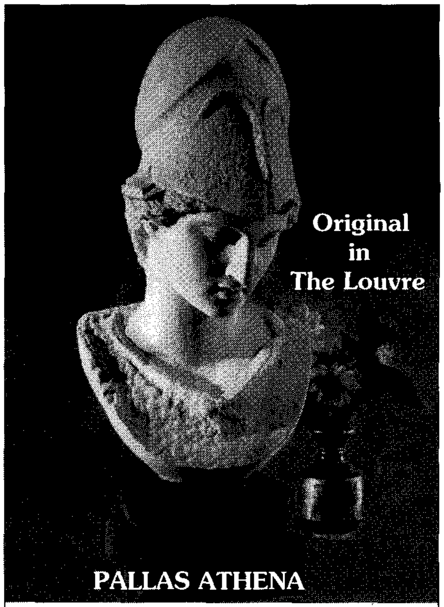
educating him in no way, leaving behind them no fragrance of personality. It was the same at the Residence and Camp David. His children came and went (their departures carefully noted). Movies were shown, always enjoyable; every smile was happy, every little girl cute, and at all social events "a good time was had by all."

"Dutch," Morris writes, calling Reagan by the youthful nickname he uses throughout the book, "remained a mystery to me, and worse still—dare I entertain such heresy, in the hushed and reverent precincts of his office?—an apparent airhead." Yet surely this was impossible. Here, after all, was a man who scored spectacular successes in movies (he was Hollywood's No. 1 box-office draw in 1943) and television (his "General Electric Theater" topped "I Love Lucy" in the ratings), a man who won political prominence first as a New Deal liberal and trade unionist (he was five times president of the Screen Actors Guild) and then as the unquestioned leader of the conservative wing of the Republican Party, a man who served two terms as governor of California and two as President of the United States (defeating incumbents to get both jobs, and winning reëlection to the second by a historic landslide), a man who has been given credit (never mind how deservedly) for winning the supposedly eternal and unwinnable Cold War. How could such a man—the protagonist of such a gaudy, tumultuous, outsized life—turn out to have nothing inside?

This was the question that drove Edmund Morris around the bend, where he collided with a writer's block of terrifying proportions. His stratagem for resuscitating himself and his book, as the world knows, was the creation of a doppelgänger. "Edmund Morris" was born in Chicago, in 1912 (a year after the birth of Ronald Reagan); went to school in Canterbury, England, and summered in the vicinity of Dixon, Illinois (where Dutch Reagan went to high school and summered as a lifeguard); and attended Eureka College, in Eureka, Illinois (as a member of Reagan's class). In these and many other particulars "Edmund Morris" may be distinguished from Edmund Morris, who was born in Kenya, in 1940; went to school in Nairobi; and attended Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, South Africa. In 1968, both "Morris" and Morris were making the move to America, but the former was fifty-six at the time, the latter only twenty-eight.

"Edmund Morris" crosses paths with Dutch Reagan so often as to risk arrest for stalking. When Dutch patrols the beach at Lowell Park, "Edmund" is in the water, or is sitting on the sand, taking careful note of the lifeguard's reading matter ("A Princess of Mars," by Edgar Rice Burroughs). When Dutch plays football for Dixon High, or delivers a speech to protesting Eureka students, or is strangled in an avant-garde play by Edna St. Vincent Millay at a collegiate theatre festival in Chicago, "Edmund" is in the audience. In 1938, "Edmund" sees Dutch and "his cutie," Jane Wyman, on the beach off the Santa Monica Pier. In 1941, "Edmund" gets a job on the set of a Ronald Reagan picture and keeps a diary of the production. ("There's something disturbingly mechanical about RR's grin," he writes.) At the beginning of 1943, "Morris" goes to the Army's First Motion Picture Unit and is welcomed to the Culver City headquarters by the base personnel officer, First Lieutenant Ronald Reagan; they serve together till the end of the war, "Morris" keeping voluminous notes on Dutch throughout. In 1953, "Morris," who happens to be working for Dutch's brother Neil Reagan at the McCann-Erickson ad agency, helps torpedo a proposal from Dutch, whose movie career is faltering, for a radio series about his life on the ranch with Nancy. In 1958, "Morris," who is doing freelance public-relations work, flacks for the annual convention of the California Fertilizer Association. The guest speaker: Ronald Reagan. And so on.

The "Morris" stratagem enables Morris to write about Reagan's pre-Presidential life with some of the same immediacy, informality, and attitude that he brings to his descriptions of what, later, he actually saw. By the book's halfway point, though, "Morris" has pretty much grabbed center stage, with the help of a half-dozen other imaginary friends—most prominently "Paul Rae," a fellow Lowell Park beach habitué and Eureka College classmate, who grows up to be a bitchy, Dutch-obsessed gossip columnist, peppers "Edmund" with (fake) letters and (mostly fake) clippings about Reagan, and eventually dies of AIDS. The chatty, abbreviation-speckled, literary-allusion-dotted letters and diaries of "Morris," "Rae," and the rest all sound more or less alike. But fictional characters, even poorly drawn ones, have a



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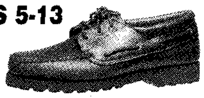

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way of escaping the control of their creators and taking on lives of their own.

WHEN the narrative reaches the nineteen-sixties, the fictionalizing reaches its apotheosis. Unto "Edmund Morris" a son, "Gavin Morris," is given. Like Edmund Morris (but unlike "Edmund Morris"), "Gavin" is born in 1940. In the background, Ronald Reagan is touring the country on behalf of General Electric, tacking hard to the political right, delivering his famous televised address on behalf of Barry Goldwater on the eve of the 1964 election, moving into the governor's office in Sacramento, and dispatching the National Guard to Berkeley to show who's boss. In the foreground, "Gavin" is becoming a radical. Not just any radical, though. In 1962, he travels to Port Huron, Michigan, for the crucial organizing meeting of Students for a Democratic Society, and then goes back to New York with Tom Hayden to help him polish the Port Huron Statement, the essential document of the early New Left. In 1964, he becomes a grad student at Berkeley, just in time to be in Sproul Plaza for the event that launches the student movement of the sixties. His "father," still living in London, is vaguely aware that something must be happening—listening to the BBC, he hears "a girl named Joan (in my diary I spelled it 'Byass') singing *The times they are a-changin'* "—but he doesn't know what it is. (Joan Baez, by the way, had appeared on the cover of *Time* two years earlier.) "Edmund" gets the details in a letter from "Gavin," who, it seems, is not just another face in the crowd:

> About a quarter of noon, a cop car noses into the crowd, slow and quiet. Meanwhile 2 deans & some campus police come to the CORE table, where some of us are sitting (Why do they *happen* to choose the one that wants justice for Negroes?) I stand up—asking for trouble, since I'm so tall. Bastards ignore me, arrest Jack Weinberg, drag him into the car. . . . I yell, "Sit down!" jump in front of the car & park myself. Next thing I know, the wave's spread out & the car with Jack inside is becalmed in a sea of sitting students. At least 1,000 of us. Mario Savio, one of my philos. buddies, carefully takes off his shoes & climbs up onto the car. . . . When Mario's hot he's super-articulate.

Nor is this all. In 1966, "Gavin" throws himself into the campaign against Reagan for governor, helping to carry the city of Berkeley for Pat Brown. By 1968, when he isn't busy working on a dissertation about French radical thinkers ("I could only hope he would concentrate on Camus and resist the Marxist blandishments of Sartre, that *nègre* in so many a scholarly woodpile," his "father" somewhat tastelessly records), he's befriending the Black Panthers. ("Bad cats I dig in Oakland," "Gavin" calls them, sounding more like Sammy than Angela Davis.) And he doesn't just befriend them; he boasts that he's the one who has introduced them to the works of Frantz Fanon. Also in 1968, he goes to Paris for the May uprising ("SDS needs somebody on the scene who's hip in French") and then, in August, to Chicago to help lead the demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention. He sends his worried "dad" an anachronistic telegram—"CHILL OUT I'M OKAY"—followed by a chirpy letter:

> Well 2 make a long story short, guess who got gassed with me in Windy City. None other than Michelangelo Antonioni. *Sì*, Mr. *L'Avventura* himself! In Chicago casting "unknowns" for his new movie, *Zabriskie Point*. Said I was too tall at first, but we hit it off, & I got him through a few doors (he wanted to rap with SDS). When he started shooting at Cal he hired me. $1000 a month: not bad bread.

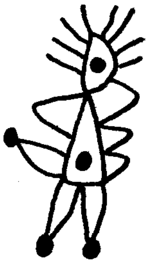
In 1969, "Gavin" is covering the People's Park riots for the Berkeley *Barb*, and participating in them, too. "Dad" flies in, but "Gavin"—last seen throwing a rock at one of Governor Reagan's helicopters as it swooped down and sprayed Sproul Plaza with tear gas—is nowhere to be found. The story rushes to its melodramatic conclusion:

> And that was the end of Gavin, apart from two communications. The first was a simple, unsigned telegram, dated June 23, 1969: GONE UNDERGROUND. The other, much bulkier, reached me from Oregon more than a year later when Ronald Reagan was campaigning for a second term as Governor. It was addressed in a round female hand and contained nothing but my son's political manuscripts, most notably the chess-game dissertation, complete to the last word: *noir*.
>
> Gavin cannot have been the only Weatherman to "drop out"—awful phrase—as the Sixties became history. Hundreds of other old men, I'm sure, nurture querulous hopes that one day their graying sons will come back home from Sweden or Vancouver. But Gavin won't. Child of the south, beach boy, desert lover, he never took to northern light. Going underground, where there was no light at all, meant the same to him as to any ancient Greek.
>
> And it was you, Dutch, who put him there.

The extreme improbability that a

twenty-nine-year-old founding member of S.D.S. would join the Weathermen—a violent, lunatic splinter that had nothing but contempt for what the Port Huron Statement stood for—is the least of this passage's troubles. Perhaps I'm misreading it, but it certainly seems to be saying that Ronald Reagan was responsible for driving the only and beloved son of "Edmund Morris" to suicide. When Edmund Morris gets to the White House, though, he doesn't make a big deal of it. It's never mentioned again.

ONCE Reagan becomes President, "Morris" 's appearances grow rare. But he comes charging back in the book's final pages, when the author makes two "pilgrimages." The first is to Bergen-Belsen, the concentration camp where Reagan, in an effort at balance, had spoken before his visit to Bitburg. "It was," Morris writes, "the most awful yet beautiful landscape I had ever seen. And when, walking back past the long graves, I stopped at the Jewish memorial and saw its frieze of lopped-off trees (some much shorter than others), I thought of my father and Gavin, and Dutch and Anne Frank, and wailed like a Jew." The second, on August 2, 1998, is to Lowell Park. Looking out at the water over which Dixon's most famous lifeguard once kept watch, Morris, or, rather, "Morris," now reveals the identity of the beneficiary of the twenty-fifth of young Reagan's seventy-seven rescues (a rescue that has been described, way back on page 62, in a purported clipping from the Dixon *Evening Telegraph* of August 3, 1928):



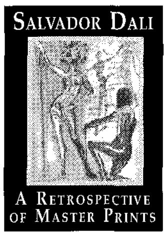
> It was a good thing Dutch was not there, or I might have blurted what I wanted to write, my confession to him at last: that the drunken youth he pulled ashore here in the dark, exactly seventy years ago, had been me.

Wow.

This came as a surprise to me, though it will not come as one to anybody who picked up last week's *Time* (where, by way of raining on *Newsweek's* parade of Morris excerpts in its issue for the same week, the secret was prominently disclosed), or to anybody who has been watching television or listening to the radio lately. The shocko ending is written in a husky, sonorous tone that suggests a solemn effort to tie everything together. But perhaps Morris is only having a bit of fun.

By contrast, it's no fun at all to be put in the position of having to join what will presumably be a gaggle of stuffed shirts, all querulously (to use one of Morris's favorite words) scolding Morris for being a bad, bad boy. "Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan" has some solid merits. Morris can write beautifully, especially when he is limning action or sense impressions; his account of the 1981 attempt on Reagan's life, for example, is a marvel of muscular description, as is his quick portrait of what the Warner Bros. studio looked, felt, and sounded like when Reagan joined it, in 1937. His research has turned up some reportorial gems: a strong suggestion that Reagan, in 1938, was eager to join the Communist Party, and that the Party, wary of his flakiness, dispatched Eddie Albert to explain to him that he would be more useful to the cause on the outside; a catty charge by Nancy Reagan that Jane Wyman tricked Ronnie into his first marriage by threatening suicide; a searing glimpse of the bitterness of Holmes Tuttle, the principal sponsor and bankroller of Dutch's political rise, at the Reagans' blank ingratitude. There are other merits, too; but the obligatory analysis of Morris's "Morris" stratagem leaves less room for a reviewer to discuss them—much, perhaps, as "Morris" 's account of "Gavin" 's Berkeley adventures (sixteen pages) leaves less room for such details as the 1980 general-election campaign (a page and a half).

ONE feels for Morris. Presented with unexampled access, a colossal advance, and the subject of a lifetime, he kept drilling holes and, he thought, coming up empty: no gusher of revelation, no mother lode of meaning. In due course, his desperation drove him to a kind of madness. It happens to be a madness that much of the best modern fiction consciously strives for: the "unreliable narrator," whose skewed vision becomes the engine of the story. It's the madness of Nabokov's Charles Kinbote, the academic critic who annotates a long poem by the Frostian poet John Shade—a poem called "Pale Fire." The novel, in the shape of the poem and Kinbote's increasingly unhinged *explica-*



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tion de texte, is a dizzying portrait of the critic's growing frustration, his obsessive pursuit of his subject, and his spiral into despair; and it is very funny. But one needn't be a harrumphing traditionalist to suggest that the conversion of frustration into deception is quite another matter in biography.

Fiction relies on the suspension of disbelief. What "Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan" induces in the reader is a suspension of belief. The accumulation of fake scenes, fake letters, and fake documents, all scrupulously documented by fake footnotes, eventually takes its toll, and one begins to wonder about the "true" passages as well. It's natural to be cautious about the reliability of the observations and quotations in a passage footnoted "EM Diary, Sept. 21, 1928," because EM—the real EM, that fellow with a beard who was on "60 Minutes" the other night—did not exist in 1928. But what about a passage footnoted "EM Diary, Jan. 14, 1993"? Doubt steals in. Might not its observations and quotations have been tampered with, too, in the service of drama or clarity or elegance? The book never surrenders its hold upon the reader's interest, but as the narrative progresses that interest eventually turns morbid. Historians will treat "Dutch: A Memoir" as source material—as a quarry that, mined with the right degree of critical skepticism, will yield things of great value. But history "Dutch" is not.

Curiously, Morris has in fact succeeded where he claims to have failed. Despite his protestations of bafflement, he has shed new light—harsh, bright light—on Reagan's character. That character turns out to be roughly as we knew it to be. The public Reagan is the affable performer, docile on the set but stubbornly attached to a few large, simple notions. The private Reagan, too, is affable, docile, and stubborn. He is also, as Morris shows with great acuity, narcissistic, egocentric, happy, trustful, childish, and oblivious. He is intellectually inert, a terrible bore, a practitioner of denial, and a cold, unimaginative man who has no interest in, curiosity about, or genuine compassion for other people.

It's clear that, at bottom, Morris dislikes Reagan. It's also clear that he thinks Reagan was a great man and a great, or nearly great, President, because he restored the country's optimistic spirit, revitalized the economy, and brought the Soviet Union to its knees. But Morris does not show *how* Reagan did these things, or even *that* he did them. Morris is incapable of making an argument of that kind. He is interested only in character—in personality. He is not interested in politics, which is the medium through which character makes its impact upon events. He himself has no apparent political opinions or preferences, apart from a dislike of abortion and an amorphous sympathy for the homeless. In "Dutch: A Memoir" there is almost nothing about electoral politics, nothing at all about ideological politics, and not a word about political economy. About international politics there is narrative, some of it very strong, but no analysis. Reagan may or may not be an empty vessel, but, in Morris's rendering, he is surrounded by emptiness, drifting weightlessly in a vacuum. Morris has told us more than we knew before about "Reagan's own humanity" and about "the quality of his personality." But it is fair to ask the question: So what? ♦

BONJOUR, SAGESSE

Youth recalled in exile.

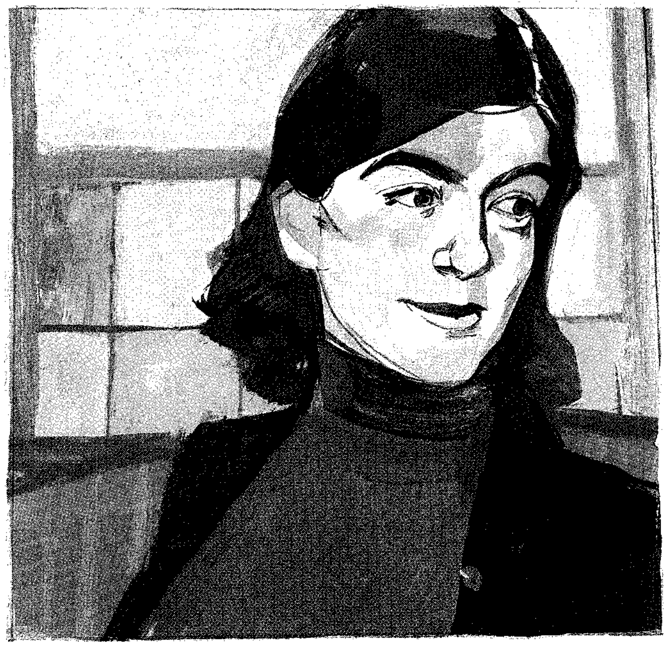
BY ANNA SHAPIRO

CLAIRE MESSUD'S ambitious second novel, "The Last Life" (Harcourt Brace; $24), begins with a bang, literally—the narrator's grandfather fires a gun into a group of his granddaughter's friends—and goes on to cover suicide, idiocy, revolution, adultery, mania, and exile. The resultant sombre tone seems to be issuing a warning not to enjoy life too much, and if one trusted the bleak views of the narrator, Sagesse—that we are all alone in the dark in a strange place, for instance—we might not even enjoy the book. But Messud textures her novel with all the sensory pleasures that bind us to life, and fills it with characters who helplessly respond to each other's unspoken signals and nuances. "The Last Life" is an openhanded invitation to revel in the troubles of others at no cost to ourselves; indeed, it offers everything that has turned people into avid readers since made-up personal histories were first set into type.

This is the history of the LaBasse family and, in particular, of Sagesse, the LaBasses' second-youngest member, whose slightly insistent name can mean "wisdom" but also, ironically, "good behavior" (or, as *sagesse d'après coup*, "hindsight"). She is fourteen in 1989 when the family patriarch, who owns a hotel in the South of France, becomes annoyed at her crowd for their recently forbidden night swimming in the hotel pool and shoots into their midst. A boy and a girl are superficially wounded, but it is evident that deep wounds are suffered by Sagesse, whose popular crowd drops her, and by the family as well, as if the bullets had not only scandalized the community but shredded the bonds that held the LaBasses together.

It is soon clear that the family had been fraying a long time, however—at least since the birth of Sagesse's younger brother, Etienne, who is incapable of language or locomotion. Strapped into a wheelchair and drooling, he is the end of the LaBasse dynasty, made flesh. To Sagesse, he is the punishment for its transgressions. In her eyes, even the meeting of her American mother, Carol, and Algerian-born father, Alexandre, takes on an aura of original sin: both outsiders, each sees the other as the insider. (Alexandre's greeting is "I thought you must be French," while Carol sees him as "France incarnate.") Sagesse views their hopeful marriage as a mistake about the flexibility of familial and national identity. For her, this romance founded on error represents worse acts, committed by earlier, colonialist LaBasses, concerning how capriciously they define family and how badly they treat those who are excluded.

Sagesse learns of this ugly legacy hint by hint during the two years of the family's unravelling. So there is a gothic mystery to follow, but it is the progress of Sagesse's immediate interests which keeps you turning pages, wondering if she will snag a handsome teen-age hotel guest, or if her best friend will ever talk to her again; if her grandfather will go to jail, and if that will quell her parents' endless battle. (Alexandre is his father's hotel employee, but in Carol's view he is his father's slave.) When Sagesse takes to hanging out with some local delinquents, the reader fears a misstep that will send her off-track permanently.



Messud: Her novel is an inquiry into the nature of belonging.

MESSUD has a phenomenal gift for eliciting the sense of consequence in what are often trivialized as ephemeral adolescent preoccupations. Sagesse's first crush, for example, resonates throughout the book. Even her socially shaming acne becomes a metaphor for the state of the LaBasse family: suppurating, unclean, needing to be hidden, it is everything she wishes to put behind her. Earlier, Sagesse's dreamy narration captures her first intimation that the passage of time, which children are always cheering on, actually reduces a formerly tangible world to ghosts. Describing the changes experienced with her childhood companions, Sagesse observes, "They had been there when the extra parking lot behind the tennis courts—paved over five years at least—was a grassy playground adorned with swing set and slides." The most soaring scene comes when Sagesse, visiting her American relatives after the shooting, half-willingly attends a séance held by eleven-year-olds and finds that the ghost that is briefly raised is her earlier, more innocent self.

Next to this eternal and universal tragedy of change, the conclusions Messud provides for the mystery of the LaBasses feel like illustrations of the kind of literary theory in which the linchpin of "Mansfield Park" is seen to be the offstage ownership of slaves in the West Indies. The French occupation of Algeria is depicted as more or less the LaBasses' personal crime, causing a certain amount of eye-rolling in this reader, at least. But Messud's writing transcends her conscious intentions. Both of her novels are inquiries into the nature of belonging, whether to a family or to a nation, and into how much choice one generally has in life (damn little, it turns out). While the narrative's dire tone may not be fully justified by the story's events, it does create an atmosphere of urgency. Even the didacticism stimulates a sense that what is coming is of crucial importance: you don't just want to find out what happens next; you feel that the story will tell you the meaning of existence. No surprise, perhaps, that it can't, and maybe it's just as well: we may not accept Sagesse's judgments, but, then, it is not as a sage that we relate to her.

Sagesse resurrects these years of her adolescence during a self-imposed exile in which, on the last page, an unexpected grace note of romance is allowed. Living in New York, in her twenties, she writes:

> Although I thought I knew to be careful what I wished for, I didn't, perhaps, know the meaning of "too late." Even now, when I lock myself out of my apartment, and yet can see, in my mind, the exact position of my keys on the kitchen counter, ready to be snatched up—I cannot quite accept that those keys are inaccessible to me, that in the instant in which I slammed the door they became irretrievably, unsalvageably distant.

The great value of this novel, in which door after door is closed on successive identities, is the degree to which Messud convinces us that the keys to our own successive lost selves, lying on the other side of time's door, are retrievable between her book's covers. ♦

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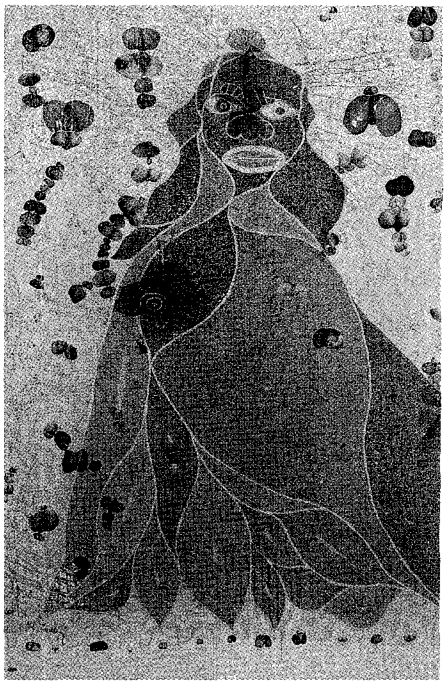
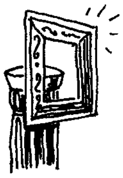


THE ART WORLD

THOSE NASTY BRITS

How sensational is "Sensation"?

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

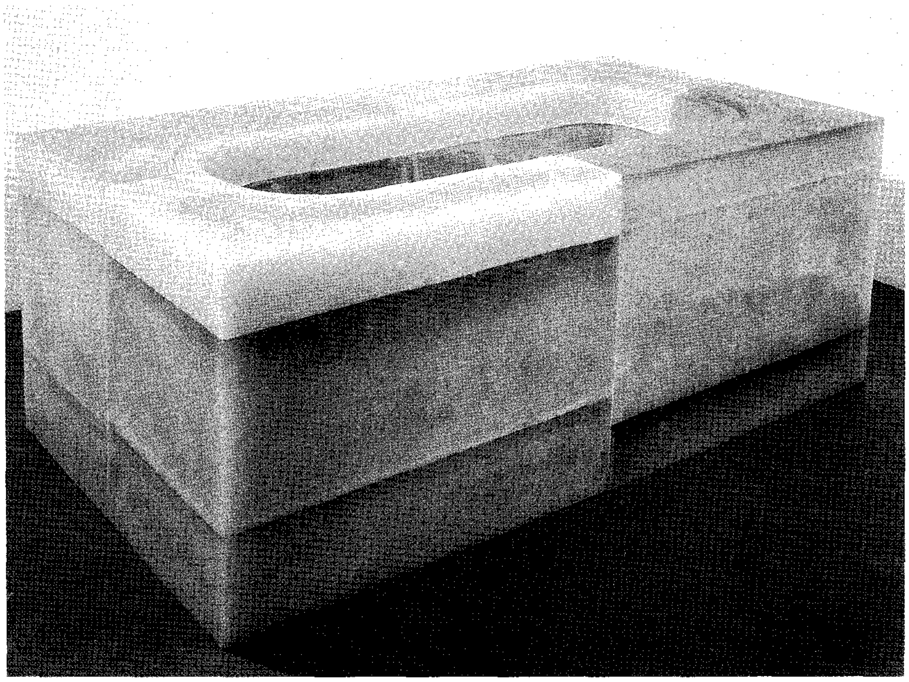


I'M sorry, but I think that this whole Brooklyn Museum deal—the Mayor, the dung, all of it—is fun. An exhibition that was hopefully and is now aptly entitled "Sensation," of works by an assortment of sometimes strenuously naughty young British artists, was fun to start with, not to mention good. (All the works are from the collection of the advertising mogul Charles Saatchi.) Rudolph Giuliani's P.C. intervention—politically correct in form and, I suppose, in Utica—makes it more fun. His determination to punish the grand and usually lonesome palace of culture on Eastern Parkway, where "Sensation" will run until January 9th, may assure attendance to rival that of the show's previous box-office successes, in London and Berlin. I imagine the artists shedding grateful tears, à la Sally Field: "He hates me! He really hates me!" One of them, Ron Mueck, contributed a huge self-portrait that hilariously resembles Giuliani. The museum has installed it in a gallery whose only other artwork is the object of the Mayor's wrath—"The Holy Virgin Mary," by a thirty-one-year-old British artist of Roman Catholic faith and Nigerian ancestry named Chris Ofili.

In a show that offers plenty of other targets for indignation, the Mayor picked wrong—as might anyone who hadn't actually seen the exhibition. Ofili's lightning-rod canvas is gorgeous, sweet, and respectful of its subject, rendering her as a sternly hieratic African personage in petal-like blue robes. Much of the painting's surface shimmers ecstatically with glitter in yellow resin. Tiny collaged cutouts of bare bottoms from porn magazines evoke putti, and allude to the element of fertility in Mary's symbology, which Ofili did not invent. As for the pachyderm product, it is one smallish, attached lump, capped with what appears to be black-and-white beadwork (in reality pushpin heads) in a design of concentric circles. Elephant poop turns out to be innocuous-looking stuff, not unpleasant in color and almost decorative in texture (lots of straw). Ofili makes freer use of it in other paintings in the show. For example, turds affixed to a work entitled "Afrodizzia" are adorned with the names of black cultural heroes, including James Brown and Miles Davis. Ofili is a large-spirited artist who comes to praise, period.

Does it matter that Ofili is innocent of sacrilege? In political terms, probably not. His work's quality emerges only upon open-minded looking. It can't be summarized in a sentence, and no number of sentences will remove the lasting kick of one in which the words "the Virgin Mary" and "dung" rub shoulders. We know by now that whenever politics and art collide art loses—at least, in these United States, where anything cultural can become politicized at the drop of a grievance. In Britain, things are different. There politics gets culturized. Here we attack one another with charges of civic evil. They do it with insults, imputing personal awfulness. Now, awfulness is well within the ambit of negotiable artistic tones, while evil is not. In America, an artist can get away with many things within the art world, but he is crushed if exposed to public opinion. In England, where no one seems to get away with anything, public outrage may be hard to distinguish from cherishing. They fancy their nasties. Can we fancy them, too?

FOR awfulness aforethought, the cake in "Sensation" is taken by Damien Hirst's dead animals and fish, and his dying flies. In an epically disgusting sealed environment, filthy buzzers by the zillions incubate in a rotting cow's head, feed on heaps of sugar, mate, and meet death by a bug zapper as one



watches or, perhaps, flees. Close behind are Sarah Lucas, the bard of East End bad-girl attitude, with her dirty-joke arrays of junk and foodstuffs, and Jake and Dinos Chapman, whose phantasmagorias of little-girl mannequins sprouting adult genitalia in odd places (faces, commonly) call for a genre coinage: pedography? I despise the Chapmans' work. I don't trust that they know half of what they are dealing with in presuming to advance themes of childhood and sex. Forget gross. I believe that the Chapmans' work is stupid—unlike that of Hirst and Lucas, with whom I feel in excellent, though unkind, hands. Hirst is some sort of great artist. His improbable balancing of brutality and finesse will thrill you if you can stand to let it.

The show's senses of "sensation" are more varied than one has been led to expect; it includes works of subtlety and even grace. Only about half of the forty-four artists go for the jugular. While we are dealing with those who do—or are reputed to—note must be taken of Marc Quinn and Sam Taylor-Wood. You have, perhaps, heard of a self-portrait bust fashioned out of nine pints of the artist's blood? That's Quinn's "Self." It is a quiet presence in its refrigerated case, with dark, suave qualities of a lovely material that I am instantly aware of never having seen before. That the material is solid blood becomes a bit of detached information, adrift behind my eyes. Quinn's work is desperately elegant, and I like it very much. Taylor-Wood, who is a woman, makes photographic murals. "Wrecked" is a raucous burlesque of "The Last Supper," starring pals of the artist as the disciples and—doing the Jesus thing—a bare-breasted woman. (Memo to Giuliani: sic 'em!) It will not make you forget the staggering send-up of the scene in Buñuel's "Viridiana."

Derivativeness is a major artistic issue in this show. It is sure to eclipse mere provocation as a sore spot for local art worldlings. Technical and formal imitation, often of American originals, abounds among these Brits. The sculptor Rachel Whiteread, who is the most respectably esteemed member of the crew, has made much of her career by copping an idea that Bruce Nauman nailed in the mid-sixties: taking casts of negative spaces in the real world. Nauman materialized the space under a chair. In Brooklyn, Whiteread fills a room with casts of the spaces under a hundred chairs. O.K., Nauman did his piece in dour cement. Whiteread uses tinted, light-thirsty resin, which is as appetizing as Gummy Bears. Is that difference enough? Meanwhile, Hirst's formaldehyded critters ape Jeff Koons's famous basketballs suspended in treated water, and the British artist's carnival-type spin paintings add nothing except large size and cute titles to precedents by the New Yorker Walter Robinson. Are we mad yet?

Well, the English didn't invent rock and roll, either. They just took it to peak levels. Is Whiteread Paul McCartney to Nauman's Buddy Holly? Is Hirst Mick Jagger? What, after all, is *wrong* with appropriating other people's high-art research to further one's own crowd-exciting development? Regarding American art, the show's message is mixed. On the one hand: sincerest flattery. On the other: a whiff of classical imperialism. You know, home country extracts raw material from colonies and sells back finished goods.

British artists have a group dialectic going, building on each other's variations. Here is a sample of critical prose from an essay in the show's catalogue by one of the artists, Martin Maloney: "Hirst, understanding [Mat] Collishaw's coup with the gunshot wound photograph, created work that brought together the joy of life and the inevitability of death, in the process transforming the secrecy of Collishaw's voyeurism into mass spectacle." Never mind what that's about. Roll the sound of it around on your brain. Maloney's confident high seriousness verges—but only verges—on Monty Python silliness. Hirst and his cohort steer happily between the sublime and the ridiculous, earning equally appropriate academic beard-stroking and tabloid frenzy. It's a matter not of "high" and "low" but of inside and outside: cooking to engage both the gourmets in the kitchen and the rabble in the soup line.

It has been said that London in the nineteen-nineties is New York in the eighties—history repeating itself as farce. By all accounts, however, the scene-makers over there are having a far better time of it than many of us did here in the viciously competitive, money-maddened, cocaine-fried eighties. This may be because the Brits have a real handle on a real conundrum—which is, roughly, how to square the special and contrarian nature of artists with the bland and complacent character of a vastly expanded audience. The two can't be squared is the British short answer. The long answer is that a high old time can be had when the situation is exacerbated as mordantly and inventively as possible. Like the honk of a foghorn in the night, the sound of an occasional exploding fatmouth indicates that these artists' course is dangerous and true. ♦

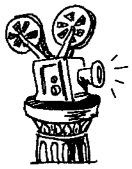
Lucas's "Au Naturel," Ofili's "The Holy Virgin Mary," Whiteread's "Untitled (Orange Bath)": The sublime and the ridiculous.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

IN A LONELY PLACE

Soderbergh in L.A., and "Happy, Texas."

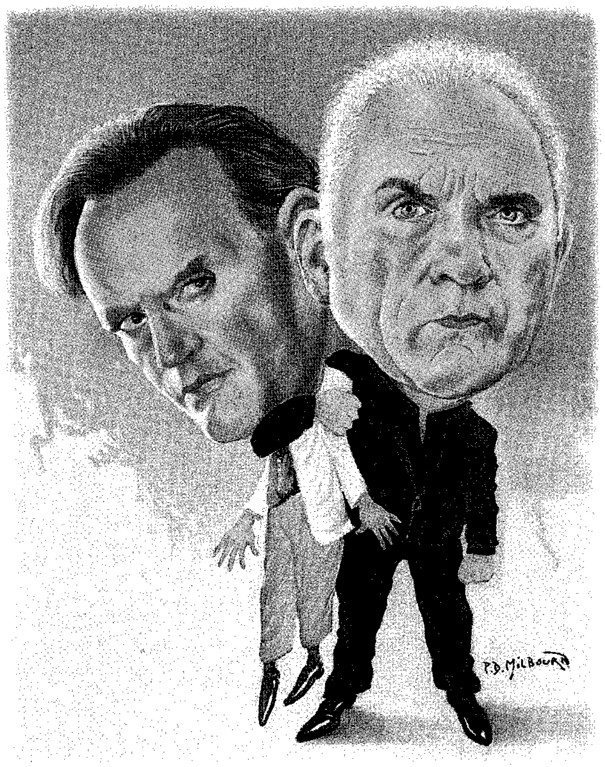
BY ANTHONY LANE



THE new Steven Soderbergh picture, "The Limey," stars Terence Stamp as a lean, unflappable British criminal known simply as Wilson. He flies into Los Angeles on a revenge kick; his daughter, Jennifer, died in a suspicious car accident, and he has come to administer justice. A typical scene shows Wilson being beaten up and thrown out on the sidewalk; he gets to his feet, takes a gun from his waistband, and walks back into the building. We hear a flurry of shots; the camera waits patiently, or politely, in the open air until he has finished, like a dog outside a store.

Soderbergh approaches the story, in other words, much as Wilson confronts America, with an oblique cut and thrust—an ironic contempt for histrionics—that feels determinedly European. When Soderbergh leaves America too far behind, as in "Kafka," he stumbles, but here he buys beautifully into Wilson's vision of L.A.—an alien's culture shock, from which the city emerges as a roasted and depopulated desert. The only company comes from the snakes rattling underfoot—people like Avery (Barry Newman) and his boss, Terry Valentine (Peter Fonda). Terry is a creature of the sixties: a record producer of infinite riches, whose gravity-scorning house cranes over the city like a hippie Berchtesgaden. "Is there anything in the world that you want or need?" he inquires of a girl in his pool. The story, written by Lem Dobbs, demands only that Wilson find Terry and, after a brief inquisition, finish him off; viewers will have to decide whether Soderbergh's dexterity—flashbacks, flash-forwards, slowdowns, spasms of imagined action that never come to pass—is an honest response to the feelings that turn and glitter in Wilson's predicament, or whether the director is covering for an empty heart.

The same uncertainty applies to Terence Stamp. Many of the pinup boys of the sixties have crumpled or drooped, but not Stamp; with his carved cheekbones and spookily erect posture, he continues to resemble one of those feline deities worshipped in ancient Egypt. Only his voice lets him down: it was always too light and inexpressive for the menace of his manner, and that's a problem for "The Limey," which is obsessed with quirks of speech. Not content with simply talking in Cockney rhyming slang, Wilson keeps explaining it to his friends and victims—something that no self-respecting Cockney would do. One guy looks bemused by the word "tea leaves." "Thieves," Wilson says wearily. He is so evidently the central icon of "The Limey" that the surrounding cast—including Joe Dallesandro as a bodyguard and Lesley Ann Warren as Elaine, a friend of Wilson's daughter—can't help honoring the solemnity of his quest. "Are you serious?" Elaine asks. "Have you ever known me not to be?" Wilson replies.



An ironic contempt for histrionics: Stamp and Fonda in "The Limey."

Soderbergh's last film, "Out of Sight," was rife with the comedy of flirtation and screwup, and it is weird to see him fight shy of the farce that should attend a lone Englishman in a foreign land. Only Avery tries a shot: "What's England, anyway? Some rinky-dink country half the size of Wyoming where the cops don't even carry guns." Wilson's response, in deference to local customs, is to pull a gun on pretty well every other man in the film. If "The Limey" has power to move us, it is to be found not in the deadened morality of its hero but in the occasional glimpses of his past. The young Terence Stamp really is played by the young Terence Stamp—by clips of Stamp in "Poor Cow," the Ken Loach film of 1967. This is an extraordinary trick, for it implies that all movies inhabit a sealed universe, with its own depths of memory. The Loach was as grainy and combative as the Soderbergh is sleek and dry, but that contrast alone makes Wilson a more interesting man—what, you want to know, has happened in the meantime? I wanted more of this; a shot of Peter Fonda in his "Easy Rider" days, for instance, would have given Terry Valentine the kind of back story that he requires. On the other hand, think of all the Warhol flicks, like "Flesh" and "Trash," that Joe Dallesandro made. Maybe you can have too much of a good thing.

OF the principles governing the world of cinema, only one is universally binding: Never ignore a film that starts with a man slapping another man over the head with a squashed armadillo. Having fulfilled this criterion, Mark Illsley's "Happy, Texas" proceeds amiably on its way, moving from roadkills to single-sex love, beauty pageants, SWAT teams, and emotionally choked rabbit shoots. This suggests that we are being lured into the land of the "offbeat comedy"—a perilous and often severely unfunny place to be. But when you have players like Steve Zahn and Illeana Douglas in your charge you can't *not* let them riff; it would be like denying Chuck Norris the right to bear arms.

Zahn is shaping up as one of the biggest Munchkins in movies; indeed, it is time that someone took a serious look at the tradition of leading homunculi and their strangely shaped heads, from Cagney and Rooney to Peter Lorre, Donald O'Connor, and E.T. They all dwell in conditions of temperamental extremity, be it sweetness or militant lunacy; Zahn sways between the two, and he is thus a natural for Wayne Wayne Wayne, Jr., his violently mustached persona in "Happy, Texas." Wayne and a fellow-con, Harry (Jeremy Northam), escape from a prison truck; they steal a camper van and assume the identity of the van's owners, a pair of gay pageant organizers. Landing in the town of Happy, they go about their business: Harry, who was doing time for fraud, sets his sights on the bank, and especially on the bank's manager, Josephine (Ally Walker), while Wayne, who sings like a trapped kitten, gives song-and-dance lessons to a bunch of little girls. He also offers one of them a smoke and shows her how to throw a punch; a true liberal, Wayne has yet to entertain the notion that age, size, and gender make any difference at all.

For good measure, he makes eyes at the girls' teacher, Miss Schaefer (Illeana Douglas), who initially censures Wayne for swearing in front of the kids (specifically, for "vulgar language like the G-d word") and later applauds his successful tuition with the phrase "You are fucking great." Script-development wonks in Hollywood would describe this as a difficult character arc, but Douglas breezes through it and leaves you wondering whether there might be something inherently sexy in clean living. If so, this would be a significant find for American comedy, which has long clung to the idea that, in the hunt for satisfaction, small-town piety exists to be peeled away. But then "Happy, Texas," though indubitably a small picture itself, performs a useful service in stripping down the image of rural quietude: from the moment Wayne, who needs a getaway vehicle, asks, "When did people in small towns start locking their cars?" we realize that the days of slow, tumbleweed melancholy may be numbered. It's a tone that gave us fine movies like "The Last Picture Show," but one of the purposes of comedy is to wave smelling salts under the noses of the sad.

You catch the same snap-out-of-it attitude in Ally Walker; some of her lines are too gluey, but the way she listens to Harry's crooning come-on, waits for a second, and then laughs out loud will give hope to romantic agnostics everywhere. It helps, of course, that she thinks he is gay—"Yeah, like a straight guy is *ever* going to say anything like that," she says. I am glad to report that the libidinal confusion in this movie is too frantic to summarize; suffice to say that once the town sheriff, Chappy (William H. Macy), joins the fray, pretty much anything goes. All that Illsley asks of these people is that they make the effort to be as adventurously baffled about their desires as the next man; if, as Chappy discovers, the next man happens to be a seven-foot Texas marshal with a jaw like a cow's, well, so be it.

Everyone gets on with this movie; it certainly brings out the best in Jeremy Northam, who at last slips the handcuffs of costume dramas like "An Ideal Husband" and makes a bid for unshaven freedom. I doubt whether, at the dawn of his career, he expected to end up country dancing with William H. Macy, but he allows himself to look guiltily thrilled by his own footwork; you can have fun in unlikely places, the movie proposes, and in the most ill-fitting of guises. "So we're gay," Harry tells Wayne. "How hard can that be?" For his part, Wayne is even more relaxed. "That whole gay thing's just a hobby," he explains to Miss Schaefer, who is too postcoital to be concerned. "Happy, Texas" will infuriate those who argue that our lives should be driven by our sexual orientation; it will appeal most, in fact, to those who don't like arguing about anything at all. ♦

THE NEW YORKER

Statement required by 39 U.S.C. 3685 showing the Ownership, Management, and Circulation of THE NEW YORKER, published weekly, except for six combined issues: the last week of February and the first week of March, the last week of April and the first week of May, the last two weeks of June, the last two weeks of August, the last two weeks of October, and the last week of December and the first week of January (46 issues). Date of filing: October 1, 1999. Publication No. 873-140. Annual subscription price: $42.00.

1. Location of known office of Publication is 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036.

2. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publisher is 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036.

3. The names and addresses of the publisher and editor are: Publisher, David Carey, Advance Magazine Publishers Inc., published through its division The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. Editor, David Remnick, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036.

4. The owner is: The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. Stockholder: Through intermediate corporations to Advance Publications, Inc.; The Advance Voting Trust, sole voting stockholder, 950 Fingerboard Road, Staten Island, N.Y. 10305.

5. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, *or other securities are: None.*

6. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding twelve months	Single issue nearest to filing date
A. Total no. copies printed	920,416	911,568
B. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1.Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions	780,846	752,704
2. Sales through dealers and carriers, street venders, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	45,590	39,964
C. Total paid and/or requested *circulation*	*826,436*	*792,668*
D. Free distribution by mail	12,335	17,152
E. Free distribution outside the mail	7,707	7,269
F. Total free distribution	20,042	24,421
G. Total distribution	846,478	817,089
H. Copies not distributed	*73,938*	*94,479*
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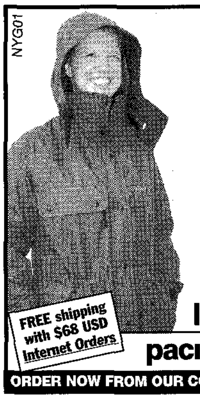

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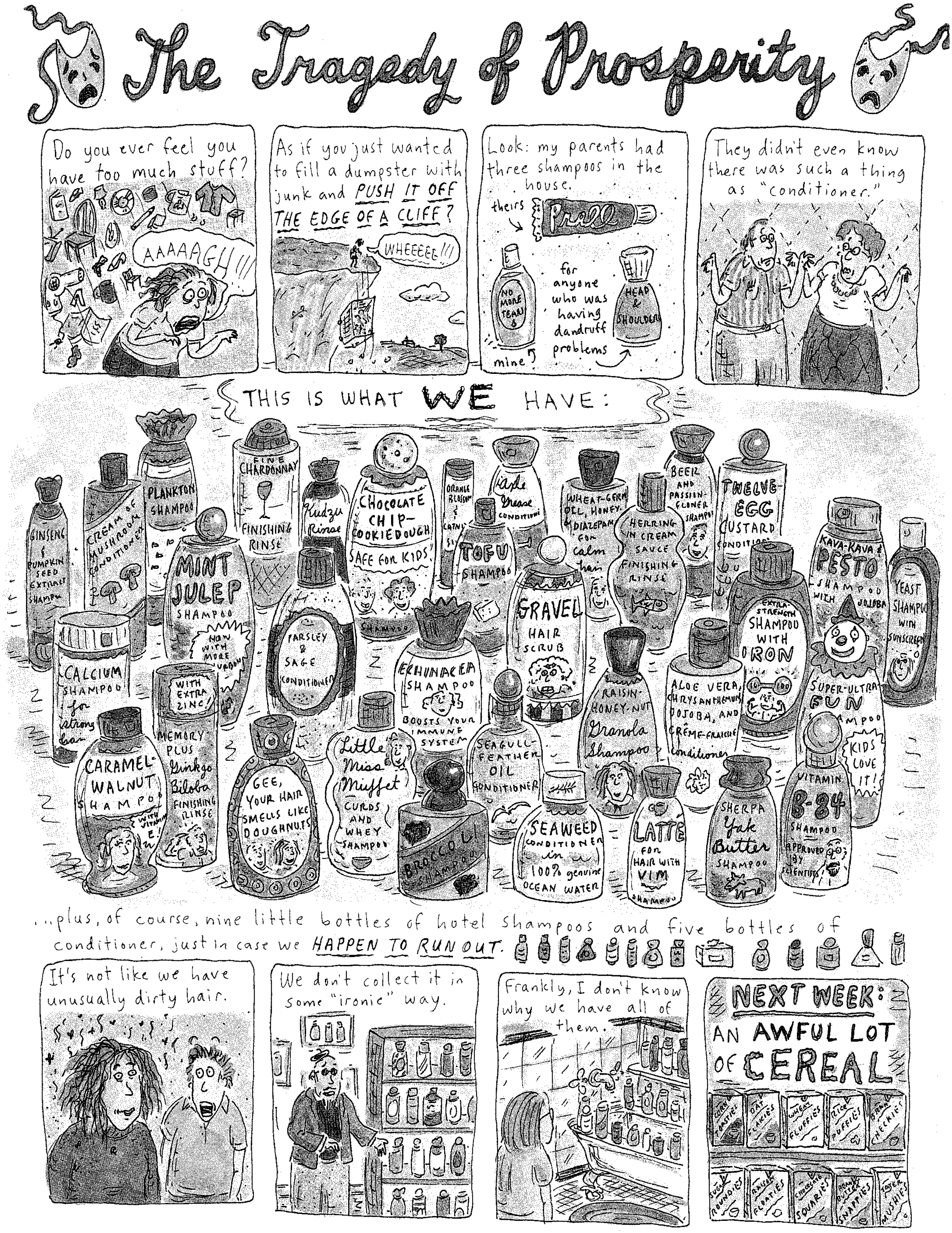
The Tragedy of Prosperity
Do you ever feel you have too much stuff?
AAAAAGH!!!
As if you just wanted to fill a dumpster with junk and PUSH IT OFF THE EDGE OF A CLIFF?
WHEEEEE!!!
Look: my parents had three shampoos in the house.
theirs
Prell
NO MORE TEARS
mine
for anyone who was having dandruff problems
HEAD & SHOULDERS
They didn't even know there was such a thing as "conditioner."
THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE:
GINSENG & PUMPKIN SEED EXTRACT SHAMPOO
CREAM OF MUSHROOM CONDITIONER
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NOW WITH MORE BOURBON
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BROCCOLI SHAMPOO
SEAGULL-FEATHER OIL CONDITIONER
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LATTE FOR HAIR WITH VIM SHAMPOO
SHERPA Yak Butter SHAMPOO
VITAMIN B-84 SHAMPOO APPROVED BY SCIENTISTS!
...plus, of course, nine little bottles of hotel shampoos and five bottles of conditioner, just in case we HAPPEN TO RUN OUT.
It's not like we have unusually dirty hair.
We don't collect it in some "ironic" way.
Frankly, I don't know why we have all of them.
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AN AWFUL LOT OF CEREAL
CORN TOASTIES
OAT FLAKIES
WHEAT FLUFFIES
RICE PUFFIES
BRAN CHECKIES
SUGAR ROUNDIES
RAISIN FLOATIES
CHOCOLATE SQUARIES
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TATER MUSHIES
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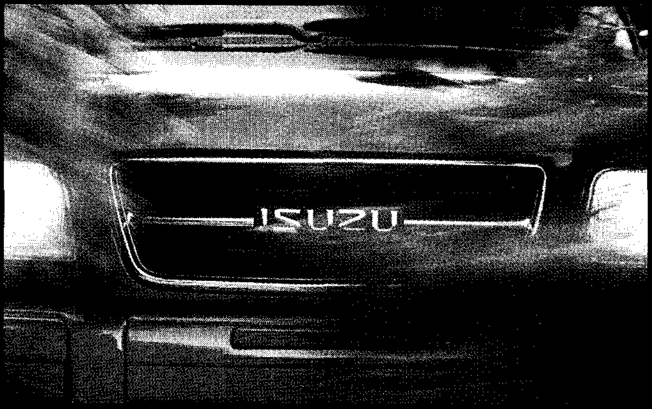

We're not a car company. Car companies make SUV's you're afraid to take off-road. SUV's you're ashamed to even get dirty. Obviously, that can't be said about the 1999 Isuzu Trooper. It has a terrain-sensing, Torque-on-Demand® 4-wheel drive system. And it has ABS brakes that even work in four-wheel drive. In other words, it's the kind of SUV a company thinks up when they don't waste time thinking about cars.

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